No. 1438.—Vol. 55

THE PENNY ILLUSTRATED PAPER AND ILLUSTRATED TIMES

December 22, 1888

REGISTERED AT THE GENERAL POST-OFFICE AS A NEWSPAPER.

London: Printed and Published at the Office, 10, Milford-lane, Strand, in the Parish of St. Clement Danes, in the County of Middlesex, by Thomas Fox, 10, Milford-lane, Strand, aforesaid.

HER MAJESTY AND THE EMPRESS FREDERICK AT OSBORNE: CHRISTMAS-TREE FOR SCHOOLCHILDREN.

NEW CHIMES FOR THE OLD YEAR

FROM

ST. HELENS, LANCASHIRE, ENGLAND.

—:o:—

I.

Again the festive holly crowns the year!
Again, with gladness, THOMAS BEECHAM sends

A CHRISTMAS GREETING

WAFTED FAR AND NEAR

To hosts of cordial hearts and troops of friends!
Joy be with all! bright hopes, good luck, and wealth!
And—what is found with BEECHAM'S PILLS—

GOOD HEALTH!

II.

And here, it seems befit to state
That during Eighteen Eighty-Eight
The sale of BEECHAM'S PILLS
Has grown at most tremendous rate,
By reason of their virtues great
To cure a hundred Ills!
Not on our British shores, alone
Have countless thankful sufferers known
This Medicine's remedial pow'r,
But day by day, and hour by hour,
'Tis blessed on **India's** sunny strand,
And hailed with joy in **Yankee-Land,**
Where, in the 'cutest spot on earth,
The 'cutest people know 'tis WORTH

A GUINEA A BOX

(To all intents—
Though they figure it out in dollars and cents.)

III.

The swift muse of commerce now lovingly thrills
To tell of the triumphs of BEECHAM'S PILLS!
The Factory, splendid and worthy the times,
With its beautiful Clock and melodious chimes!
Then sing of what pen and what pencil have done
By means of the press in the year that has gone;
And the MUSIC PORTFOLIO, scattered galore,
To the number of **six million copies,** or more!
How much we could say if we might but delay!

BUT REMEMBER—

THE WONDER OF WONDERS, TO-DAY,

The strangest surprise, that will gladden your eyes,
And make you for ever both merry and wise,—

IS THE CHARM

"BEECHAM'S ORACLE,"

BOUND TO DISCLOSE

What Fun says to Wisdom in language that glows!
Then get a supply from your Chemist. and see—
The NEW MUSIC 's Gratis! The ORACLE 's Free!

MR. RICHARD MANSFIELD will OPEN his SEASON at the GLOBE THEATRE, SATURDAY EVENING, DEC. 22, in PRINCE KARL, at 8.45, with New Scenery and New Dresses. PRINCE KARL will be preceded, at Eight precisely, by EDITHA'S BURGLAR. Mr. Lionel Brough as the Burglar. Box plan now open.—GLOBE THEATRE.

Now ready, THE

ILLUSTRATED LONDON ALMANACK

FOR 1889.

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THE CHRISTMAS NUMBER

OF

The Penny Illustrated Paper

WITH

CHARMING COLOURED PICTURE,

"COME UNDER THE MISTLETOE,"

Beautiful Reproduction of Fred. Morgan's fine Painting.

THE "OBSERVER," OF DEC. 9 SAYS:

"The Christmas Number of *The Penny Illustrated Paper* is, perhaps, the best value for its price (fourpence) of any we have seen. For the variety and interest of its letterpress it is equal to, if not better than, most of its contemporaries. The leading features of its literary department are a story by Mr. George R. Sims, entitled 'Tinkletop's Crime,' and a highly dramatic tale by the able editor, Mr. John Latey, jun., entitled 'Diamonds Led; Hearts are Trumps,' which is full of vigour and interest. Amongst the other contributors are George Manville Fenn, O. P. Q. Philander Smiff, Byron Webber, Richard Henry, William Mackay, J. Pullan, and William Senior. With such a list of popular writers *The Illustrated Paper* Christmas Number cannot fail to please all tastes."

"ATLAS," OF THE "WORLD," COMMENDS:

"The capital *Noël* Number of *The Penny Illustrated*, with a thrilling story by Mr. John Latey, jun."

"CARADOS," OF THE "REFEREE," SAYS:

"The Christmas Number of *The Penny Illustrated Paper* has just come to hand, and proves to be even better than its many interesting predecessors. The genial editor, John Latey, jun., contributes a strong and stirring story, entitled 'Diamonds Led; Hearts are Trumps,' which is full of sensational incident, the description of the flooded diamond mine being especially thrilling."

"PUNCH" ROOTY-TOOTS:

"I've just seen the Christmas Number of *The Penny Illustrated*, price fourpence, which means that this is equal to four ordinary numbers. 'Diamonds Led' is a three-volume novel essenced into five pages. Several other good things in it."

"FUN" BREAKS INTO VERSE:

"*The Penny Illustrated Paper* (some say *P. I. P.*)
Has issued a delightful Christmas Number;
Its pictures and its narratives will be perused with glee,
And will give you pleasant dreams whene'er you slumber.
Editor Latey's thrilling story is a 'thriller,' all agree,
And they who haven't read it, why, be-Latey'd they must be."

The *Daily Telegraph*, *Daily News*, *Daily Chronicle*, *Morning Post*, *Pall Mall*, *Star*, *Era*, *London Figaro*, *Lloyd's*, *Scottish Leader*, the *People*, the *Lady's Pictorial*, *Globe*, *Sporting Times*, *Sporting Life*, *Entr'acte*, the leading provincial papers, and the *Sportsman* print similar notices.

PRICE FOURPENCE.

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Published by THOMAS FOX, 10, Milford-lane, Strand, London.

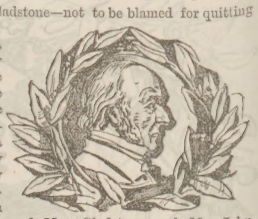
The Penny Illustrated Paper.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1888.

OUR LONDON LETTER.

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCESS OF WALES won all hearts, as usual, by her beauty and charm of manner when she accompanied the Prince to Ealing last Saturday to open the Queen's Jubilee Hall in that favourite suburb of London. Dressed to perfection, according to her invariable custom, the Princess wore a dark green dress of brocaded velvet and silk, trimmed with sable tails; and her Royal Highness graciously accepted a beautiful bouquet of orchids from pretty little Miss Myn M'Crea, daughter of Major M'Crea. The Prince of Wales gave additional pleasure to the good people of Ealing by likewise bringing with him Prince Albert Victor and Prince George, Princesses Louise, Victoria, and Maud of Wales—perhaps the happiest and most united family in the kingdom. Ealing's loyal demonstrations of welcome to their Royal Highnesses were duly acknowledged in one of those terse and admirable speeches for which the Prince of Wales is distinguished.

* * * * *



Mr. Gladstone—not to be blamed for quitting England for a sunny climate whilst he has the chance—had a signally hearty reception when he and Mrs. Gladstone and Mr. John Morley drove through Whitechapel, last Saturday afternoon, to rally East-End Liberals round the Home Rule banner in the Limehouse Townhall. Thanks, probably, to the persuasion of Mr. John Morley (who is reaching the big heart of London by his sympathetic references to the trials of "the toiling millions"), Mr. Gladstone did not on this occasion confine himself to the more than thrice-told tale of Mitchelstown, but sanctioned the comprehensive programme of reform on a popular basis which Mr. Morley advocated earlier in the week with moving eloquence. Mr. Gladstone distinctly went in for the principle of "One Man One Vote" (to which should be added payment of M.P.'s.—a custom rationally adopted in every other country); fair taxation of ground-rents; Leasehold Enfranchisement; and shorter Parliaments; but still insisted that the Irish difficulty demanded to be settled first. Precisely: let the doctors settle their differences, and the patient will soon be cured.

* * * * *

Mr. W. H. Smith, oppressed with the labours of this Winter Session, has left the leadership of the Commons in the capable and vigorous hands of Mr. Goschen, and is off to Monte Carlo. Happy man! The rumour runs that Mr. Smith, one of the most zealous and ablest Ministers her Majesty has ever had, may possibly be elevated to the Peerage on his return to England.

* * * * *

The Marquis of Salisbury (who has been railed at too much in what should be a merciful period of the year for his Edinburgh slip of the tongue) must assuredly wish sometimes that Lord Randolph Churchill and Lord Charles Beresford had not deserted his Ministry. Whilst Lord "Condor" delights in pouring in broadsides on account of the alleged insufficiency of our Navy, Lord Randolph Churchill has spared no opportunity to smite the Government he forsook for their policy at Souakim (where Sir John Pender, K.C.M.G., by-the-way, continues to render continuous service to England by placing the cable-ships of the Eastern Telegraph Company at the service of the Home Government—now for flashing the electric light upon the Arab lines, then for the transport of troops at a critical juncture).

* * * * *

Ramblers throughout the country may profitably take a leaf out of the book of the Upper Norwood Athenæum Ramblers, of which Mr. M. Pope is the devoted Hon. Sec. and Alderman Bowyer is the assiduous President. Their annual record, the adroit work of Mr. Pope, shows how country walks to picturesque and historic spots may be made delightful and pleasantly instructive; and their recent sociable dinner at the Holborn Restaurant proved what desirable friendships may be formed

by such admirable wandering societies as the Norwood Ramblers.

* * * * *

Londoners, during the Christmas Holidays, will probably bestow a thought upon the coming County Council for London. It will be well to secure the election of a few such eminent Statesmen of the highest capacity as the Earl of Rosebery (who has offered his services); but it is to be hoped the new Council will be strongly leavened by not a few sturdy and independent reformers of the type of Mr. John Hutton, the worthy and excellent candidate for South St. Pancras, and of Mr. Thomas Bentley Westacott, for whom I shall certainly give my vote in East St. Pancras, feeling confident that so experienced an administrator, and so zealous a promoter of public improvements of the most serviceable kind, will be of the utmost use in the Council of London. Mr. Westacott pledges himself to *Economy of expenditure*, combined with administrative efficiency and purity. With local taxes so terribly high as to well-nigh crush the majority of householders beneath the burdens, economy is of urgent importance—till the full weight of these unjust imposts fall on the shoulders of the Ducal landowners, whom it should be the first duty of the Council to direct to "pay ransom," as Mr. Chamberlain once called it—in the days before he is said to have played "Hunt the Slipper" with Duchesses.

* * * * *

The H.A.C.—established for 350 years—is such a strong and patriotic body, and its gallant representatives did England such good services in Boston, U.S., this year, in cementing the brotherhood between Great Britain and the United States, that I trust the surprising disbandment of this most ancient Volunteer Corps will be revoked.

* * * * *

Captain Armstrong and Mr. W. T. Madge deserve every credit for their judicious enterprise in making the readable *People* newspaper a huge success. The transference of the business of the paper to palatial premises (the late Temple Club transformed) has been signalised by a festive gathering, at which the Solicitor-General, Sir Edward Clarke, consented to preside in the absence of Mr. W. H. Smith. More anon!

* * * * *

Her Majesty and the Prince and Princess of Wales are not alone, among the Royal family, in setting a charitable example at Christmas. Prince and Princess Christian drove to the East-End on Tuesday to open a Christmas Bazaar in aid of the Christ Church funds; and amiable Princess Mary the same day opened the new mission buildings in St. Michael's, Kentish-town.

* * * * *

Whilst Princes, Peers, and Plutocrats generally will presently be conspicuous by their absence from London, that big-hearted gentleman, Colonel John T. North, will good-naturedly come to the rescue of the hard-working section of London Society that remains in town. The Grand Fancy-Dress Ball to be given by Colonel North on Jan. 4 will not only afford pleasure to the hosts of friends invited, but will also seasonably benefit the many busy hands which will fabricate the silken costumes, and supply the flowers and feast. An admirable likeness of Colonel North, by-the-way, is presented as a Coloured Plate with the *United Service Gazette* of Dec. 15, the gallant Colonel being pictured in his scarlet coat as Master of the Mid-Kent Staghounds.

* * * * *

My Christmas Card:—

A MERRY CHRISTMAS,
—and—
A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

PHILIP.

THE PENNY "A B C" GUIDE TO LONDON," produced from the well-known clothing stores of Messrs. Charles Baker and Co., is the handiest cicerone conceivable, alike for visitors and for Londoners who would know all about the Metropolis. Published by Mr. Joseph Smith, of 24, Great New-Street, Fetter-lane, Baker's wonderfully cheap guide presents a capital alphabetical guide to the sights and principal public buildings, and is embellished with five sectional maps of London, and a comprehensive coloured chart of the environs. Bravo, Baker!

"ADVICE TO MOTHERS."—MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP should always be used when children are cutting teeth. It relieves the little sufferer at once, it produces natural quiet sleep by relieving the child from pain, and the little cherub awakes "as bright as a button." It is perfectly harmless. It soothes the child, softens the gums, allays all pain, relieves wind, regulates the bowels, and is the best known remedy for dysentery and diarrhœa, whether arising from teething or other causes. Sold by all Chemists, at 1s. 1½d. per Bottle.—[ADVT.]

Queen and Court.

THE QUEEN received at Windsor Castle last Saturday morning with deep regret the sad intelligence of the death of his Grand Ducal Highness Prince Alexander of Hesse, father to her Majesty's son-in-law, Prince Henry of Battenberg, and uncle to the Grand Duke of Hesse, which took place at a quarter past ten o'clock in the morning.

The Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., on Saturday had an audience of her Majesty, and had the honour of dining with the Queen and the Royal family. The Bishop of Wakefield arrived at the castle, and also had the honour of being invited to dine with her Majesty.

The fog having cleared from off the Solent, the Queen decided to leave Windsor by special train at 12.20 p.m. on Tuesday for Osborne. Her Majesty, with the Empress Frederick, Princesses Victoria, Sophie, and Margaret of Prussia, and attended by a numerous suite, left the castle shortly after noon, for the Wight. The Empress Frederick, in helping the Queen to deck the school-children's Christmas Tree, cannot have failed to remember the similar German custom kept by the late lamented Emperor at San Remo a twelvemonth ago, when the skilful care of Sir Morell Mackenzie enabled that revered Sovereign Prince to preside at the distribution of the Christmas-tree gifts.

THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS.

THE Duke of Beaufort, Lord-Lieutenant of Monmouthshire; Mr. Alderman Evans, and Mr. J. C. Parkinson presented to the Prince and Princess of Wales, at Marlborough House last Saturday, a silver shield, designed by Mr. Mello Griffith, with an address, on behalf of the inhabitants of South Wales, including Monmouthshire, in commemoration of the anniversary of their Royal Highnesses' Silver Wedding.

The Prince left Marlborough House shortly before six o'clock on Sunday evening on a visit to Mr. De Murietta, at Wadhurst Park. The Princess on Monday went with the Princesses and Prince George to see "Faust Up to Date," which was greatly relished; and the Princess of Wales on Tuesday accompanied the Prince to see "Carina."

OUR SOUAKIM TROUBLE.

OUR centre Illustrations suggest that at home in England many a soldier's home will be full of anxiety this Christmas, Duty having once more called British Troops to defend the Red Sea port of Souakim from the attacks of besieging Soudanese. General Grenfell is in command at Souakim. That the news of the alleged capture of Emin Pasha and Mr. H. M. Stanley by the Mahdi has not caused the British Commander to relax his vigilance was shown by the following message from the *Daily Telegraph's* Special at Souakim on Sunday last:—

Yesterday (Saturday) the English Mounted Infantry reconnoitred the enemy's right flank. At the same time the Scottish Borderers manned the bank between the Shaata and the Gameiza Forts. There were no casualties.

Three hundred men of the Welsh Regiment have arrived in the telegraph-ship Mirror, which has been placed at the disposal of the Government by the Eastern Telegraph Company. The officers and men expressed the greatest satisfaction with the treatment which they received on board.

This morning the Mounted Infantry reconnoitred the Arab left flank and obtained a capital view of the whole position. The enemy were found to be numerous.

Reports reach us from Agig that a large amount of contraband trade and slave-dealing is being carried on to the south of the Egyptian littoral.

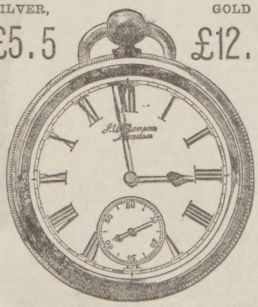
We subsequently learnt that a desultory fire was maintained on Monday from the trenches, a party of gunners replying from the Starling's 64-pounder with great effect. The machine guns of the Naval Brigade were also fired with much accuracy. One hundred and thirty of the 20th Hussars, with four officers and ninety-four horses, under the command of Major Irwin, and details of the Engineer and Commissariat Corps, and also 150 men of the 2nd Battalion of Egyptians, under Major Shakespear, have arrived at Souakim in the Egyptian steamer Hodeida.

THE German Emperor has returned from his shooting excursion to Hanover (where he bagged thirty-five of the total of 305 head of big game knocked over by his party), and on Sunday he received the credentials of the new Spanish Ambassador.

TO STUDENTS.—To all those who burn the "Midnight Oil," engaged in mental labour, we would recommend CADBURY'S COCOA; its comforting, exhilarating, and sustaining powers are extraordinary. Beware of imitations.—[ADVT.]

THE BEST AND CHEAPEST WATCH IN THE WORLD,
EXCELLING ALL OTHERS FOR ACCURACY AND VALUE, IS
BENSON'S PATENT
ENGLISH LEVER
"LUDGATE" WATCH.

SILVER, £5.5 GOLD £12.12



HIGHEST AWARD, GOLD MEDAL, INVENTIONS, 1885, TO
BENSON'S "LUDGATE" WATCH
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Description—THREE-QUARTER PLATE ENGLISH LEVER WATCH, of BEST LONDON MAKE, with Chronometer Balance, Jewelled throughout, and Patent Protection from Dust and Damp. Keeps better time than, and is double the strength and value of, any Watch made.

Thousands of Testimonials from Wearers in all parts of the world.

Made in Four Sizes:—Ladies,
Gentlemen and Youths (as illustrated),
Working Men generally; and
Specially large and strong for Miners and Railway-men.

In extra Strong Sterling Silver Crystal Glass Dome Cases, £5 5s.; or in 18-carat Gold Crystal Glass Dome Cases, £12 12s. Lady's size, £10 10s.

BENSON'S
KEYLESS "LUDGATE."

SILVER, £8.8 GOLD, £20

ENGLISH LEVER
(PATENT No. 4658).

Three-quarter Plate Movement, of our Best London Make.

STRONG KEYLESS ACTION.

In compliance with numerous demands for the "Ludgate" Watch *with keyless action*, we have specially designed the above (as shown in the Illustration), which combines all the advantages of the former together with the undoubted convenience of the keyless mechanism.

Jewelled throughout. True Chronometer Balance. Patent Protection from dust and damp. In Massive Sterling Silver hall-marked Dome Cases, engine-turned or polished, in strong Crystal Glass, Hunting, or Half-Hunting Cases, £8 8s.; or in heavy 18-carat Gold Cases, £20.

AN ILLUSTRATED BOOK, explaining the advantages of the "LUDGATE" ENGLISH LEVER over the ordinary Lever Watches, post-free on application. Also Pamphlets on WATCHES (from £2 2s. to £250), CLOCKS, JEWELLERY, and PLATE.

WATCHES SENT FREE, AT OUR RISK, TO ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD.

J. W. BENSON,
Sole Maker,
STEAM FACTORY,
62 and 64, LUDGATE-HILL, E.C.;
28, ROYAL EXCHANGE, E.C.; and
25, OLD BOND-STREET, W., LONDON.

WATCH CLUBS established under J. W. Benson's system are most beneficial both to Members and Secretaries. Applications desired from Foremen, Insurance Agents, and others to form Clubs.

Elsie's Christmas Mission.

By JOHN LATEY, JUN.,

Author of "Diamonds Led; Hearts are Trumps."

Search the loveliest county in England through and through, and you would hardly find a cosier nook than the dell in which stands Highfield Vicarage; nor a prettier, franker, more winsome girl than blue-eyed Elsie Grove, the Vicar's fair daughter. Embowered with tall poplars whose leaves musically rustle in summer, and whose branches gleam like silver spears when the snow is falling, as it should fall to herald a good old-fashioned Christmas, the ivy-clad Vicarage is an ideal English dwelling-place all the year round.

And Elsie—well, someone I know cherishes Elsie as an ideal English girl—soft, tender eyes under well-arched eyebrows, sweet-voiced, bright, fresh, everything that is charming. That other admirers share this opinion may be gathered from Dame Coleman's colloquy with Elsie at the porch late one December afternoon, when the little fairy of Highfield Vicarage had resolved herself in her downright earnest way into a village Sister of Mercy, and, armed with a basketful of seasonable Christmas gifts, was about to brave the thickly-falling flakes, and set forth alone on her charitable mission.

"Doee wait a minute now, Miss Elzie, dear," pleaded the grey-haired housekeeper; "and I'll go with yew. Doee stop now. I've only got to zee the ashen faggot 's right in the kitchen-hearth for the varm labourers. The Maister'd never forgive me if the binds weren't right; would he now? Ah, Miss Elzie, if young Zquire Hamer were yur, wouldn't *he* be mighty proud to hold the umbrella over your bonny head? I've zeen him casting sheep's-eyes at yew, Elzie, up at church, many a time. Or, what would yew zay to Laayer Jones's likely zon—or"——

"You tease, you! I declare I won't stop a single moment longer," laughingly answered little Elsie in her witching way; adding to herself, as she tripped lightly down the garden pathway, "I only hope I may find a letter from Somebody Else."

* * * *

The smile which dimpled her fair round cheeks, and played with zephyr lightness round the sweetest of rosebud lips, died away as Elsie faced the snow, and with difficulty sheltered herself beneath the umbrella. Securely as she held the well-filled basket on her left arm, Elsie was for a while clearly on other than charitable thoughts intent. When the whitened field she was crossing was green, and the Lovers' Walk under yon ghastly avenue of silvered trees was welcomed for its shade, "Somebody Else" had whispered the sweetest message in all the world to Elsie, and had received her sweet "Yes" in reply. All was Sunshine then. Joy filled two united hearts. Love seemed in the very air they breathed. Now, with the lowering clouds sending down wintry missives, what wonder Elsie felt depressed at the absence of news from her sweetheart far away in Egypt? Could aught have happened to her gallant soldier love?

CHRISTMAS ON BOARD A BOYS' TRAINING-SHIP: PLUM-PUDDING TIME.

"Bless us! if it aint Miss Elzie from the Vicarage," exclaimed postman Capper a minute or so later, as he opened his cottage-door, and let in a whirl of snow and the warm-hearted girl at one and the same time. "Yew come like a ray ov zunshine, I dew declare. Yur, Missis, yew stir the fire, and make Miss Elzie warm herzelf."

"Bless your pritty face, my dear, so yew are like zunshine," broke in Dame Capper, darting a sharp glance over Elsie's shoulder at the door of the state parlour. "Subztantial zunzhine, too! Ah, my dear" (this as Elsie nimbly opened her basket, and cheerily handed the good woman a packet of tea, a bag of flour, a parcel of Christmas fruit, and a bottle of port)—"ah, my dear, if there wur only a few more angels on earth like yew, what a different wurld this would be for us poor as yew have always got to have with yew, as the Vicar truly says, my dear!"

"Now, don't you try to spoil me with compliments, Mrs. Capper. This is only father's usual little gift, you know. And I wish you both, and little Billy and Annie, a very merry Christmas, with all my heart."

"Zame to yew, Miss; and many of 'em," broke in Postman Capper. "And Vicar, tew! He be a gude man, he be. He never passes me wi'out gieing me zummat. Curious, wazn't it, I was just coming up along to Vicarage with this late letter for yew, Miss Elzie, when"——

Sight of the foreign post-mark had no sooner sent the love-light into Elsie's soft blue eyes, and flushed her cheeks a rosy red, than the door of the little sitting-room was flung open, and a glad-faced young officer of the Guards rushed out.

"Elsie!"

"Bertie!"

And "Somebody Else" fondly clasped the fair, trembling girl to his heart; and in lovers' whispers ended Elsie's Christmas Mission, as far as the Postman's cottage was concerned, to the evident enjoyment of Mr. and Mrs. Capper.

Under the umbrella held closely over her by Lieutenant Russell, whose other arm stole caressingly round her slender waist, Elsie Grove found the walk back to the Vicarage far too brief.

A LAND BREEZE.

BY BYRON WEBBER.

—:o:—

"That is the address she gave me; but I confess that I know nothing about either the people or the place. And I very much want to know, so you must call. Do not warn her of your approach. Effect a gentle surprise, with ears and eyes wide open. She is the very best girl in the world, but as independent and as headstrong as"——

"Her brother Dick, eh?"

"Worse; much worse. A headstrong she, you know"——

"Is ten times more difficult to drive than a pigheaded he. I will not dispute it."

"This is the situation. The little the mother has is barely sufficient to keep the dear old soul in comfort; and you know how much we fellows are able to save out of our pay. Therefore the tie which binds the mater and my sister Blanche and me together is not one that enables me to assume a dictatorship; but it's strong, Ellis—precious strong, for all that. I am troubled about the girl."

"Is 'troubled' quite the right word, Dendrill? Should it not be 'concerned'?"

"There is not much difference; but have it as you please. Blanche has a ridiculously small income: enough to dress on, and perhaps a pound or two over; therefore she must work. She is a clever girl, and as full of accomplishments—real ones, mind you!—as a pomegranate is full of pips; but she thinks herself too good for governessing, and so do I, and nobody worthy of her society has had the luck to bid for her companionship; and so, what do you think?"

"I never was A.B. at conundrums. I give it up."

"Why, she is going on the stage—if she is not already there."

"No?"

"Yes. I foresaw how she was shaping two years ago, and now I want you to find out all about it."

Richard Dendrill and Mark Ellis, officers on board H.M.S. Bruiser, were having this yarn together at Malta prior to the departure of the latter of the two friends, on leave, by the mail-steamer for Southampton. Although, in reply to a sly remark of Dendrill's, he said he did not mean to deny that he had a call to make on a young lady on his own account, circumstances permitting, he promised that Miss Dendrill should be interviewed as soon as he reached the metropolis. His own business would take him a few miles further.

In due time behold him seated at De Keyser's Hotel studying a map of the modern Babylon. "Number 15, Laburnum House, Lilac-road, Starch-green. That, surely, is Hammersmith way? Ah, here it is, or, at any rate, here is where it will be. The road was only projected when the map was made. And now to wait upon Miss Dendrill."

Leaving the omnibus which had brought him to Starch-green, Ellis found his way with little difficulty to Laburnum House, and was immediately made cognisant of his being an object of interest to the grubby female domestic and her mistress, who, respectively, reckoned him up from the kitchen-window as he ascended the front-door steps to ring the visitors' bell and perform a genteel tatto with the knocker—both obligatory.

"Miss Dendrill, does she live here? is she at home?"

"No, Sir," replied the person of all work and no play; "that is"——

"To be sure she does, Marthar," said a voice that came from the top of the kitchen-stairs, the contradiction being followed immediately by the appearance of the owner, a person of faded distinction, who had not always let lodgings, and who evidently desired it to be understood that it was a condescension on her part to let lodgings now. "To be sure she does. You must excuse my maid, Sir; she has not been with me long, and is not fermiliar with the 'abits of the profession. You wish to see Miss Ruth Eshelby?—that is Miss Dendrill's name in the bill. She is in. Will you take a seat? She is engaged for the present. Marthar, see that Miss Eshelby has the gentleman's card the moment 'er lesson is hover."

Marthar said "Yes'm"; and good Mrs. Fothergill (for that was *her* name, she said) ushered the young officer into the front part of a drawing-room that was divided by folding-doors. He took a seat and leisurely surveyed the apartment. The walls were adorned with portraits of famous actors and actresses. Two well-filled dwarf bookcases, that suggested the proprietorship of Miss Ruth Eshelby rather than that of the lady who had seen better days, filled the recesses on each side of the fireplace. The breakfast things were yet on the table. As Ellis listened to two voices—a male and a female vocal organ—on the other side of the folding-doors, it dawned upon him that Miss Eshelby was receiving her lesson there.

"No, my dear; pardon me. That's not a bit like it. Try it this way:—

> Throw wide the doors and let the concourse out,
> The while the solemn strains of music rise
> To glad the hearts of bridegroom and of bride,
> And every witness to the golden bond!

Of course, it is great rubbish. Observe, however, that style—of delivery—is everything. Give the lines plenty of mouth and emphasis and mind your elucidatory action, and, depend upon it, my dear, nine persons out of ten will pronounce the stuff splendid blank verse. Now I must be off. Good morning."

"Good morning, Mr. Orbit. We shall meet later. A gentleman for me, Martha? Thank you."

The folding-doors were thrown open, and Mr. Ellis found himself in the presence of a tall girl with abundant wavy hair—her own, every wave!—of a natural brown colour, which crowned and framed a face of strong, sweet beauty and kindling expression. Her honest eyes and rich voice—her brother's voice refined into a musical contralto—spoke unfeigned welcome as she said, putting forth her hand:

"Dick's dearest friend! I am so glad to see you. And how is he?"

Dick was well, and he had sent such and such a message. Dear Dick! They sat and chatted freely like old friends, and she recounted her plans and aspirations. She was engaged at the Sheridan and would open in one of the old comedies, and—Dick might just as well know it through him—she was also engaged to be married to the juvenile lead at the same theatre.

"I dare say if Richard had been ashore I should have gone through the pretence of consulting him, my mind, of course, being already made up; but he was not, and as mamma liked Gilbert (frankly, I should have accepted him all the same if she had not) we agreed, and—named the day. Come and see him and me at the Sheridan. We are acting in a matinée together to-day."

Only too delighted if he could. He had an engagement. What was it? (She *was* frank.) Well, he was going to be photographed in his uniform. (He blushed.) Capital! she would accompany him if he had no objection. Only too delighted—again. Better still, would she and Mr. Gilbert (Mr. Gilbert Blake she interposed)—would she and Mr. Gilbert Blake give him the pleasure of their company at lunch? Yes! that would be charming. Gilbert could be telegraphed for while she dressed. The message was written, and Martha dispatched with it; and in less than an hour Mr. Mark Ellis, who had sent his uniform on to the photographer's, was posing in front of a camera, to the satisfaction of the operator—who found him an excellent sitter—if not quite to his own. The portrait which he especially preferred was put on one side. It was now Miss Ruth Eshelby's turn. The likenesses of her were equally fortunate. One was selected for Dick, and then, with engaging frankness, she begged her brother's friend to grant her a mighty great favour.

"Now that one has embarked in this profession, it would be silly to hide one's light under a bushel. I am resolved that the camera shall advertise me as it has advertised other actresses. Will you help me?—will you sit with me and compose a fancy group?"

"I, Miss Dendrill?" he exclaimed aghast.

"Yes. Do not be alarmed. Nobody in the wide world need know who it is, except ourselves and Dick and Gilbert, who will be told. The photographer does not count. Besides, it would not be to his interest to solve the mystery."

"The mystery? I do not understand."

"I will explain. Kneel to me—in your uniform—in an attitude of supplication. You must turn from, while I, standing haughty and erect, face the spectator. I will show you how. I have a premonition that such a picture would not only prove a great artistic success, but would cause me—not Blanche Dendrill, mind, but Ruth Eshelby—to be talked about, and give me, you know, the best possible kind of advertisement. Now, Mr. Ellis, will you do this for me?"

Dick would know, her affianced husband would know, and no doubt both would approve, while the public would not discover. The popular theory would be that some actor, who for special and personal reasons desired his identity to remain dark, had sat as the naval officer. Ellis meditated in this wise for a moment or two, and then consented. The pictures, two different views, were taken, and pronounced triumphant. The sittings over, Miss Eshelby retired to resume her hat and mantle, and Ellis begged to see the manager. Pointing to the portrait of himself which pleased him best, he said, naming the number he should require—

"I want you to give me a card upon which you can mount one of these, that I may write an inscription to come underneath the picture. I leave London to-morrow and shall be absent two or three days, and I wish this particular portrait to be sent the moment it is ready to this address. You understand? And now will you give me the bill?"

Oh, yes; they understood. His request should be promptly complied with. They frequently had delicate little commissions like that to execute. And they gave him the bill.

This was the inscription:—

Over the waves to woo her!—Mark Ellis.

They were a merry party, and long before the exquisite little luncheon was disposed of Ellis had made up his mind that Dick's sister had chosen wisely and well. He was charmed with the young actor, and she, who saw what an excellent impression her affianced had made, was enchanted. Mr. Blake, who had to interview his wig-maker, went off in one hansom, while Ellis and Dick's sister proceeded to the Sheridan in another.

Two minutes—no more—before the gondola of the streets was checked at the door of the theatre, an old lady and a young one, who lingered near the Sheridan, were in the midst of an animated discussion that was not altogether free from asperity:

"You know, my dear Madge, it will be paying Mr. Freeman a very poor compliment if we do not occupy the box."

"I cannot help it, Aunt Hilda. I am not well—I have a headache. I want to get home—I am expecting—— Well, I don't want to see the play, so there!"

"Madge, do not be so petulant. However, I must tell the manager I am unable to avail myself of the box. He might be glad of its restoration. I"——

At this moment Mr. Ellis stepped out of the cab, and, amid a murmur that betrayed the bystanders' knowledge of his companion, assisted her to alight.

"Stop, aunt; stop! Not yet. Wait a moment: I have changed my mind. I think I should like—to see—this play. But do wait, dear; there is plenty of time. My head!—Let us take a short walk. My poor head!"

She spoke agitatedly, did this fair young girl—spoke with heightened colour, and was "all eyes" from the moment she saw Ellis and the actress. A keen observer might have noted from other signs—such as the grip which she gave the old lady and the way she put down her foot: it was a very little one—that she was deeply moved.

"Very well, Madge," said the aunt, putting up her *pince nez* and gazing at her niece; "you call it a poor head and I will not contradict you. But what is in it? It is that which puzzles me."

They had walked but a few paces beyond the theatre when the young lady returned and almost dragged the old one with her, pausing, however, in the vestibule of the Sheridan, and proceeding shrinkingly to their box. Was she afraid of being seen? It looked like it. Once in the box,

Housekeepers appreciate the great saving that the use of tinned meat affords in time, labour, and fuel. When this is taken in connection with the greater amount of nutritive material contained in a tin of meat as compared with the fresh article, it is readily seen that Libby, McNeill, and Libby's Compressed Corned Beef goes far to solve the problem of the pecuniary economy of food, especially with those whose time is money. Libby's Beef is for sale by all first-class grocers, in 1lb., 2lb., 4lb., 6lb., and 14lb. tins. Ask for Libby's Compressed Beef, and take no other. Also ask any grocer, who will hand it free of charge, for Libby's Cookery-book, containing practical recipes for the preparation of tinned meats for table use.—[Advt.]

Laundrine is the very latest discovery. It cleans the worst soiled linen without the weary labour of the washtub. It has no smell, will not injure the most delicate fabric, is easily used, and dispenses with the use of soda, washing-powders, &c. One penny tablet will do a large washing. No busy housewife should be without it. Sold by Grocers and Oilmen in 1d. Tablets, 6d. and 1s. Boxes. Sample by parcels post for 12 stamps. Trade terms on application to the Manufacturers, The Pumpherston Oil Company, Ltd., Glasgow, and 1, Bury-st., London.—[Advt.]

The Secret of Success!—"A new invention is brought before the public, and commands success. A score of abominable imitations are immediately introduced by the unscrupulous, who, in copying the original closely enough to deceive the public, and yet not so exactly as to infringe upon legal rights, exercise an ingenuity that, employed in an original channel, could not fail to secure reputation and profit."—Adams. Caution.—Examine each Bottle, and see that the Capsule is marked Eno's "Fruit Salt." Without it you have been imposed on by worthless imitations. Sold by all Chemists. Prepared only at Eno's "Fruit Salt" Works, London, S.E., by J. C. Eno's patent.—[Advt.]

and she shrank back still more, as though afraid to face the light.

"No, auntie, no!" said she excitedly, in answer to an invitation to take a place in front. "I had much rather not; my head aches so! Let me sit here. I shall be able to see quite well with the help of the glass."

It was precious little of the play she did see, and probably she did not lose much; but if she was indifferent to the business of the stage, she discovered metal attractive enough in the audience. Fixing her gaze upon Mr. Mark Ellis, who occupied a prominent seat in the stalls, she kept it glued there almost the whole of the time.

"It is rather a nice play, don't you think, Madge?" said Aunt Hilda, as they rose to go.

"Yes, auntie; beautiful!"

"I did not say 'beautiful'—I said 'rather nice'! All the 'beautiful' plays are old. Are you ready?"

"Yes, aunt; in a minute—this bothering knot!"

The knot that was bothering you, Margaret Clissold, was not visible. The knot you were struggling to untie or cut—you did not at that moment care which—was brought near by the voice of Mark Ellis, who was at that moment passing the box-door on his way to the stage, under the convoy of Mr. Gilbert Blake. He was saying:—

"A most delightful performance. I was charmed with her!"

"Auntie," said Madge, in a voice all tears, "let us go!"

Aunt Hilda talked about the play all the way to Cherry Orchard, Staines, and Madge punctuated the comments of the old lady, mostly in the wrong places, with unmeaning monosyllables. She wanted to be at home in her own room to cry. After a copious flood of tears, she came down, refreshed and resolute, and calmly asked the maid if there was a letter for her. There was not. Thereupon she spoke to herself thus, as she went to rejoin her aunt:

"Whether we were at home or not, he might have written a note, which I could have received the moment we returned. And how was he to know we were *not* at home?" (If thoughts had feet, and could stamp, a vengeful foot would have come down here!) "I said next Thursday, and this is Tuesday. What are three days? He ought to have called—or written."

Ellis went out of town, as he had arranged, and returned to De Keyser's, as he had also arranged. The culmination of his arrangements was reached, so far as a public exhibition of them went, when he reached Staines, and pulled the bell and performed on the knocker (both operations obligatory) of one of the prettiest villas in Cherry Orchard.

"Missis and Miss Margaret have gone away, Sir, suddingly," said the maidservant; "and, if you please, Sir, are you Mr. Hellis?"

Less the H he was, and he said so.

"Yes, I am Mr. Ellis."

"Then, if you please, Sir, I was to give you something, into your own 'ands, Miss Margaret said." Whereupon Caroline, the housemaid, brought him a small parcel, and duly did as she had been told. Tearing off the cover, he came first of all upon a slip of paper containing these words—

Perfidious as you are, you might have spared the insult.

What did it mean? He explored farther. A photograph, and—oh, horror! He saw it all.

Himself in an attitude of supplication kneeling at the feet of handsome Blanche Dendrill, and underneath the picture the words—

Over the waves to woo her!—Mark Ellis.

He said he saw it all, but he was in error. He was not aware that Madge had beheld him and the actress together at the Sheridan Theatre. What was to be done? He thought for a moment. He brightened up. He exclaimed,

"I have it! Dick's sister has got me into this scrape, and Dick's sister shall get me out of it, and at once."

Well, she did; and then the land breeze—which never quite amounted to a serious disturbance—having subsided, Mark and Madge found themselves in smooth water again, and for a time the proverb anent the course of true love was deliciously falsified.

Thousands of People have tried the effect of wearing Harness' Electropathic Battery Belt for the prevention or cure of disease, and in every case the result has been most satisfactory. All in search of health should wear this, the only bona-fide reliable galvanic belt, recommended by thousands (see testimonials), for the immediate relief and speedy cure of all rheumatic and nervous affections, impaired vitality, liver and kidney diseases, ladies' ailments, &c. Pamphlet and advice free on application to Mr. C. B. Harness, Consulting Medical Electrician, the Medical Battery Company (Limited), 52, Oxford-street, London, W. (corner of Rathbone-place). Note only address.—[Advt.]

HIGGINS'S AERIAL ADVENTURE.

IGGINS, the daring English coachman who has accomplished the Parachute feats of the courageous American, Baldwin, had a narrow escape on Thursday, Dec. 13. The misadventure occurred at Snaresbrook, Essex, where Higgins made a balloon ascent from the grounds adjoining the Eagle public-house, intending to descend by a parachute after the manner of Professor Baldwin. The ascent was made in the presence of a large concourse of spectators. The balloon used was the Eagle, of 4000 cubic feet capacity, and owned by Captain Orton (under whose auspices Higgins made his début). There was no car, and the parachute was attached to the side of the balloon in the ordinary way. The arrangements having been completed, Higgins gave the signal for departure, and rapidly shot up to a height of 4000 feet. At that height

THE PARACHUTE WAS SEEN TO FALL

from the balloon, and to leave Higgins suspended above. The spectators were terror-stricken. Speedily passing out of view, the balloon descended on a piece of land near Enfield Lock, a distance of about seven miles, at 3.58, and the welcome intelligence was telegraphed that Higgins had escaped a fate which all feared was inevitable, and had sustained no injury beyond a severely sprained ankle. He was brought back to Snaresbrook, and, in answer to the pressing inquiries regarding his perilous adventure, he stated that at the height of 4000ft. a head-wind caught the parachute, and the force of the wind pressing against the silk broke the cord. The parachute then fell below and became inverted, but he, for a moment, retained his hold of the ring. Seeing, however, the peril of his position, and how utterly impossible it would be for him to attempt a descent, he finally let go, and the parachute dropped near Anger-lane, Loughton. The balloon, after the fall of the parachute, rose, Higgins states,

TO A HEIGHT OF 9000 FT.

He did not lose his presence of mind, and, having full control of the valve-lines, he had little fear that he would be able safely to reach the earth. He passed over a portion of Epping Forest, finding himself in one or two cross currents, but avoided coming down owing to the probability that if he did so the balloon would become entangled in the trees. Finally, he came down at the place already stated,

DESCENDING VERY SUDDENLY,

in order to avoid Enfield Lock. Higgins was able to leave Snaresbrook for his home in Hackney in the evening. A crowd surrounded the cab and cheered him as he drove off. In consequence, however, of Higgins' balloon adventure, the Paris authorities prohibited the parachute performance which Higgins intended giving in the French capital last Sunday. Those who watched with interest the ascents of Professor Baldwin must remember that the plucky American always took the greatest care in stowing away his parachute within the cordage of the balloon. No doubt Higgins will exercise the same caution in future.

Railway Servants.—Signalmen, Engine-Drivers, Porters, and others, who have frequently long intervals of work between meals, should drink Cadbury's Cocoa, a sustaining beverage, agreeable and comforting, during long spells of work. Beware of imitations.—[Advt.]

A CHRISTMAS FAIRY STORY.

THE GOOD AND BAD FAIRIES, AND HOW THE GOOD TRIUMPHED.

My dear Children, you asked me to tell you why it is that you are all so healthy, so full of good spirits, and so happy in all things, when there are so many that we meet every day that have none of these blessings, but who are thin and ill, every step they take painful, and seemingly quite incapable of enjoying this beautiful world of ours.

I will tell you. It is because you are guarded by a wonderful Talisman, which has shielded you from your earliest infancy, and which is the gift of the Good Fairies, who spend all their time in watching and keeping from harm the little ones in every home that possesses it; for everyone can have it if they will only ask for it, and their children will grow up healthy and strong, as you have done.

But to make you understand it all, we must go back a long time—many, many years before you were born—when the Wicked Fairies had it all their own way, and there were none to say them nay. You have all heard of the Wicked Fairies who used to take the dear little babies, just born, out of their cots, and carry them ever so far away, leaving in their place poor little shrivelled-up mites, who looked more like bags of bones than children.

Especially at that time, there were two—oh, such Wicked Fairies; nothing good about them, whose names I will tell you presently, who always were trying how much harm they could do, and never were so happy as when they were causing some misery or other to the Earth Children, as our race was called in those long-past days; so, whenever they could, they would steal away some dear little plump, crowing, darling little baby, and leave in its place a poor, wizened, miserable little thing, that everyone said was a "changeling" directly it was seen.

Did you ever hear of anything so wicked and cruel?

How long this would have gone on no one can say. Perhaps, instead of sitting now, this Christmas night, all of us around the warm fireside, so happy each of you, listening to mamma's "Fairy Story," one and all of you might have been far away from home and friends, down in the depths of the earth, digging and delving to please the Wicked Fairies who had stolen you away, and who never say a kind word, and who would tear and pinch you for very mischief. Are you not thankful that it is not so?

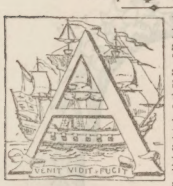
Luckily for you, there are Good Fairies as well as bad ones—so kind and true, just the reverse of those I have told you of—who pass all their time in doing good and being kind to the Earth Children; and there were also two of these whose names you shall also soon know, who could not bear to see the way in which the Wicked Fairies treated their pets, and so they set to work and thought, and thought, and thought how they could prevent their being stolen away and treated so badly. At last they discovered that they must find a certain Talisman, which was of such a wondrous nature that whoever had it in the house where they lived would be quite free from the attacks of all the Wicked Fairies, especially the two that did so much harm. Such a wonderful Talisman this! No one before had ever heard of such a thing—not large, encased in white paper, with cabalistic letters on it; and yet it not only protects children from every ill, but it provides them with delicious food, which never disagrees with them, and soon makes even a changeling plump and strong. Then the question was, How is this Talisman to be found? Where is it? Where could it be hidden? Surely, nowhere on earth? Such a treasure must be hidden away in the moonbeams, or on some distant star. So off they went, from star to star, then to the moon, but the man in it did not know anything about the "Talisman"; so at last they were nearly tired with their search, and almost gave up hope, when, having come back again to earth, they saw a dear old wise, clever physician, surrounded with books even more clever than himself, who for years had been trying to find the same Talisman that they had themselves tried so hard to find; and now he had nearly found it, and, indeed, would have quite found it, but that it could not be found by mortal man without the Fairies' help.

So, at once, the two Good Fairies, whose names were Knowledge and Carefulness, went and sat one on each side of the good doctor, prompting him and helping him on; and soon the Talisman appeared, and the good doctor gave it to all his patients; and all their children became well and strong. And all the Wicked Fairies, with the two whose names were Ignorance and Neglect, fled away, utterly powerless for harm, except to those who would not keep the Talisman. And, although there are many foolish ones who have not even yet obtained it, there are thousands upon thousands of children—yes, and grown-up men and women too—who hourly bless the good Physician and the kind Fairies, through whose exertions they are saved from Ill-Health, Disease, and Death. And you, my dear children, take to heart this little story, and, as you grow up, be sure you continue friends with the Good Fairies I have told you of, for you will always find Knowledge a powerful friend in need, and that with Knowledge, combined with Carefulness, you will escape almost every ill that can come upon you. And what is this Talisman, possessing all these marvellous properties? Can you guess? You have seen it often enough. Why, a tin of Dr. Ridge's Patent Cooked Food—a Talisman, indeed, giving Health, Strength, and Comfort, and Quiet Nights.—[Advt.]

CHRISTMAS AT HOME AND CHRISTMAS AT SOUAKIM: *HIS* DARLING AND *HER* HERO.

CHRISTMAS AT HOME AND CHRISTMAS AT SOUAKIM: *HIS* DARLING AND *HER* HERO.

The Playgoer.



AUGUSTUS HARRIS had the satisfaction of seeing Drury-Lane Theatre crowded from stalls to gallery last Saturday night, when the imposing drama of "The Armada," joint work of himself and of Mr. Henry Hamilton, a brilliant success, was performed for the last time. "Beautiful scene!" murmured Sir Frederick Leighton as he was leaving after the magnificent closing pageant of Queen Elizabeth's Thanksgiving Procession—a gorgeous tableau worthy the fame of Mr. Harris. There was a surprise in store for the indefatigable Lessee. The presentation of his Royal Italian Opera Company the previous Saturday at the Manchester Theatre Royal was capped by the gift of an exquisite bust of Shakspeare on the part of Lord Ronald Gower, the patrician sculptor, and by the present of a silver jug by Mr. Leonard Boyne, as spokesman of the Armada company—gratifying compliments which Mr. Augustus Harris suitably acknowledged. Thereafter to the new Lyric Theatre at the Piccadilly end of Shaftesbury-avenue—past the new Shaftesbury Theatre and D'Oyly Carte's new playhouse being built opposite the Shaftesbury. Mr. Henry J. Leslie merits praise for the good-taste and comfort embodied in the Lyric, one of the most charming and beautiful theatres in London, erected by Stephens and Bastow from the designs of Mr. C. J. Phipps. When the run of the tuneful and bright "Dorothy" (transferred to the Lyric from the Prince of Wales's on Monday) is at an end, the same composer and author's "Dorcas" is to be produced. "Dorcas" is said to be even more melodious than "Dorothy." Hence harmony should reign for a long time at the Lyric.

I wish that accomplished artist, Mr. Richard Mansfield, success in his management of the Globe, whereat he reproduces "Prince Karl" to-night, prefaced by "Editha's Burglar" (Mr. L. Brough).

The attractive and popular Alhambra Theatre of Varieties has never boasted so supremely beautiful a ballet as the new choro-graphic and musical spectacle "Irene," which reflects equal credit on M. Jacobi, Signor Casati, M. Alias, and the Management, which has literally spared no expense in mounting this terpsichorean triumph. "Irene," is a work of dazzling splendour—a model of gay vivacity and chaste elegance. It is the seventy-seventh ballet to which M. Jacobi has composed the music; and the labour entailed by this species of ear-tickling composition may be realised when I mention that in the original score of "Irene" alone there are no less than 254 sheets of music, transcribed by M. Jacobi's own hand. "Irene" is the allegory of one Carlo, who, pursued by a malignant fairy, Lissa, is made happy at last by the fair heroine who gives the name to the piece. Nothing more animated can be seen on any stage this Christmas than the sprightly and captivating Fair scene, wherein, on Monday, buoyant Miss Thurgate achieved a veritable triumph, and Mdlle. Marie was much admired, whilst the newcomer, a bewitching young *première danseuse*, Signorina Legnani, danced to perfection, placing herself at a bound by the side of clever Cossio and nimble Kormani in public estimation. M. and Madame Alias excelled themselves in the artistic grace and lustre of the exquisitely-fashioned dresses, harmonised in colour to perfection. A feast of rich colouring was the dashing Neapolitan Fair: if such a scene is to be witnessed at the present day in Naples, no wonder the G. O. M. has levanted to that seductive Italian city! When the golden rain descends, and the electric lights glitter like real stars in the azure sky in the final scene, truly a rainbow of beauty, it is then that the full witchery of the radiant and softly light dresses of M. Alias, Prince of costumiers, is realised. The novel wedding of draperies of zephyr and gossamer texture, woven by Queen Mab herself, I imagine, with glowing bodices and becoming filigree coiffures deserves the warmest praise. It is a sumptuary triumph on the part of M. Alias. Good! "Irene" is sure to draw full houses on Boxing Day, afternoon and evening, and throughout the Christmas Holidays. The excellent programme closes with the enchanting idyllic ballet, "Ideala."

I think the Adelphi patrons, so liberally catered for by MM. Gatti, may count upon a fresh success on the current Saturday night, when the stirring and engrossing melodrama of "The Silver Falls," by MM. Sims and Pettitt, is to be produced. Apropos, playgoers—among whom are many able reciters—should welcome Mr. George R. Sims's new shilling book, "The Dagonet Reciter," sympathetically dedicated to his good friend and co-worker, "Pendragon," Mr. Henry Sampson. It opens with a moving new ballad, "The Long Strike," which I should like to hear Mr. Fernander recite. Much of Mr. Sims's own domestic life, I may whisper, is embodied in "Mary Jane's" prose recital, "Mr. Saxon."

Chat of the London Gossips.

["What the *World* says."]

Christmas being the period when Harmony should reign, Mr. Edmund Yates does well to give Dr. Alexander C. Mackenzie, Principal of the Royal Academy of Music, as this week's "Celebrity at Home," in *The World*, his home being in the Regent's Park-road. Very happily and vividly does the sympathetic writer hit off the personal appearance of Dr. A. C. Mackenzie:—

"The windows of his third-storey study command a view of the topmost branches of the trees in the Zoological Gardens, and you see them waving in the wind, as the door is opened by a stoutly-built man of medium height, with bright hazel eyes, an auburn Vandyke beard, and a peculiarly prominent and angular forehead, half hidden in a woollen Shetland cap of many colours. Alexander Mackenzie never dons the robes of a Doctor of Music, or the sober attire suitable to them, in the Regent's Park-road.

["*Truth* to Tell."]

The editor of *Truth* says the annual show of the toys to be distributed among the workhouses and hospitals at Christmas takes place on Thursday and Friday in this week (Dec. 20 and 21) at the Portman Rooms, Baker-street. By the exertions of my lady readers in the doll-dressing competition, I have been placed in possession of about 3800 dolls of "the regulation" size, and, in addition to these, there are more than fifty large dolls originally costing over half-a-guinea apiece, which have been dressed by lady readers of *Truth* with a taste and magnificence beyond all praise.

I hear that the Empress has decided to return to Berlin when she leaves England next month, instead of proceeding to Italy, as was her original intention.

Among the most acceptable of Christmas presents are, obviously, watches and jewellery, a glittering array of which attracts the eye at Mr. J. W. Benson's popular establishment on Ludgate-hill. From Mr. Benson's factory has recently come a handsome Christmas-box for Trowbridge—viz., a fine ornamental clock for the Townhall. Both the Townhall and the Clock are the gifts of Mr. T. R. Brown to the town of Trowbridge.

"Any Doctor will tell you" there is no better Cough Medicine than Keating's Lozenges. One gives relief; if you suffer from cough try them but once; they will cure, and they will not injure your health; they contain only the purest and simplest drugs, skilfully combined. Sold everywhere, in 1½d. Tins.—[Advt.]

Health Underclothing.—Ladies, send for Patterns of white and scarlet flannels, undyed wools, fancy shirting, and dressing-gown flannels, sent, post-free, from the manufacturer, John Noble, Victoria Mills, Manchester. Better and cheaper than German manufactured goods. Please write at once, and mention this Paper.—[Advt.]

Throat Affections and Hoarseness.—All suffering from irritation of the throat and hoarseness will be agreeably surprised at the almost immediate relief afforded by the use of "Brown's Bronchial Troches." People troubled with a "hacking cough," a "slight cold," or bronchial affections, cannot try them too soon, as similar troubles, if allowed to progress, result in serious pulmonary and asthmatic affections. See that the words "Brown's Bronchial Troches" are on the Government stamp around each box.—Of all Chemists, 1s. 1½d. per Box.—[Advt.]

J. THEOBALD & CO.'S SPECIALTIES.

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ASTOUNDING PRICES.

EVERY PAIR GUARANTEED, ALL MADE OF BESSEMER STEEL. NO COMMON RUBBISH KEPT.

10,000 Pairs Ready to go off by Return of Post.

THE CELEBRATED CALEDONIAN SKATES, only one screw to turn at the heel, which makes the Skate bite all over the foot and cannot work loose. The Skate of the season. The only recognised perfect Skate. Enormous sale last season. Carriage free, 6s. 6d.

THE RENOWNED ACME PATTERN SKATE. Best quality. Once the screws are adjusted properly to the feet it is only necessary to press a lever to take them on or off. Price, free, 3s. 6d. Nickel Silver, 6s. 6d.

THE POPULAR KENSINGTON STEEL SKATE.—Fastens to the heel by means of a screw knob, with leather straps to go across the toe. Free, 2s. 6d. per pair. Send for Catalogue for full description. Order To-day. Be sure and say the length of your boot in inches. Every size in stock—7 in., 7½ in., up to 12in.

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BIJOU MAGIC-LANTERNS AND SLIDES.

THE SALE INCREASES EVERY YEAR. NOTHING BETTER FOR A PRESENT.

These carry the palm over all others. Each set is packed in a Japanned tin travelling-case. The Lanterns and most of the Series are of superior English make. These are specially got up so as to form nice presents, and will give satisfaction everywhere. Price Cash Certificate free with each set.

No. 1 Set comprises Japanned tin case containing a best English-made Lantern, fitted with two lenses, paraffin lamp, glass chimney, silvered reflector, 60 really Comic Figures on 12 long Slides; 3 complete Nursery Tales, each Tale having 12 Pictures on 4 Slides, making 36 more Pictures; 2 Comic Slipping Slides, 2 Moving Lever Slides, 2 Moving Panorama Slides, 1 "Good Night" Slide, 1 "Welcome," 1 Man swallowing Rats, 2 Chinese Firework Slides, making 107 Pictures in all, complete, with instructions, giving a picture on the sheet of 37ft. diameter. Price 10s. 6d.

No. 2.—Precisely similar, but having a No. 2 Lantern and No. 2 Slides, forming a larger size throughout. Gives a picture 4ft. in diameter. Price 14s. 6d.

No. 3.—Having a No. 3 Lantern and No. 3 Slides. Throughout a very excellent set, giving a 6 ft. diameter picture. Price 21s. Bottles of specially-prepared Chemical Oil, giving far superior light, 6d., 1s., 1s. 6d., and 2s. 6d. Larger sets up to £50. See Illustrated Catalogue.

PUNCH AND JUDY SHOWS. The Boy's Own Punch and Judy, made to fold up and pack away when not in use, 12½ inches high, with coloured curtain, metal adjustment to stage, wooden supports, six figures, and book of words. 1s. 3d., free. Much larger, with twelve figures (some of them jointed), book of words, recti toot, pandean pipes, and lamp, complete, 2s. 6d. Model Theatres, with stage figures and words complete, 1s. 3d. and 2s. 9d.

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THE MAGIC FOUNTAIN PIN.—A beautiful gold-plated stag's Head Pin for scarf or dress, which diffuses sprays of delightful perfume at will of the wearer. Post-free, 1s. 3d.; very superior ditto, 2s. 3d. THE ANIMATED PIN.—A Clown's Head, the eyes and tongue of which roll about as the wearer walks along. Immense Novelty. 1s. 6d.

LITTLE LADY DOT'S DOLL'S HOUSE. Selling in thousands. Enormous success. See testimonials in Catalogue. A jointed Doll's House, made to fit up and take to pieces, beautifully-coloured interior, to represent Library, Drawing and Dressing Rooms; fancy bordered Carpet, Lady Dot and her sister with clothes to take on and off, complete. Free, 1s. 3d.; much superior ditto, with Lady Dot's Brother and Mamma, Hats, Bonnets, Flowers, Bathing Costumes, &c., 2s. 9d.

THE CELEBRATED NORWEGIAN SLIPPERS. ORIGINAL INTRODUCERS. SALE 1000 PAIRS DAILY. We are happy to state we have greatly improved these slippers at an extra cost without charging the public any more. They are now made a much better shape, and much stronger throughout, and better quality material, in Scarlet, Blue, and Black. The great advantage of these Slippers is that there is No Leather, Nails, or Hard Substance to Hurt the Feet. They are Felt throughout, very strong, very nice looking, and very easy. We send them to all parts of the world; people wear them all the year round. Try one pair, and you will soon send for more. Prices:—Ladies', 1s. 6d., post-free; gentlemen's, 1s. 9d. 2d. per pair discount if three pairs are taken, 4d. per pair discount if six pairs. State size required, and try a pair at once. Customers who once have them always have them.

NIGGER AND AMATEUR THEATRICALS. Immense assortment; only best quality. Moustachios, 6d. Whiskers and Moustachios, 1s. Beards, 1s.; Full ditto, 3s. 6d. Nigger's Wigs, 2s. 3d.; or Riding Top, 3s. 9d. Sets of Bones, 1s., 1s. 6d., 2s. 6d. Black for Faces, 8d. and 1s. 2d. Collars, 1s. 2d. and 1s. 6d. Cuffs, 1s., 1s. 6d., 2s. pair. Shirt Fronts, 2s., 2s. 6d., 3s. 6d. False Noses, 6d. Tambourines, 1s., 1s. 6d., 2s., 2s. 6d. Banjos, 6s. 6d., 6s. 6d., 8s. 6d. Spangles, 7d. and 1s. 2d. packet. Boxes of Theatrical Make-up, Paints, Powders, Brushes, Spirit, Gum, Hair, &c., 2s. 9d., 5s. 6d., 10s. 6d., and 21s. Masks of every description.

GIGANTIC SCRAP PARCEL.—Read this carefully.—Enormous inducement to purchase largely.—We offer for a few weeks only. Each Parcel contains 250 Scraps all coloured for decorating scrap-books, screens, &c. Beautiful Relief Scraps, Embossed Pictures, &c. Dogs, birds, horses, flowers, ships, houses, fields, niggers, palaces, Royalty, musicians, portraits, sea-pieces, &c., carriage free. 1s. 3d. In each Packet is given gratis a magnificent Sixpenny Relief Scrap, 13 in. by 7 in., and a grand Puzzle Picture of 32 pieces to put together. Or our No. 2 Packet, with 600 Pictures, containing all the above in much greater variety, and many Pictures in Frames. The largest bargain of all, carriage free, 2s. 9d. With this Packet is given gratis Three large Sixpenny Relief Scraps, 13 in. by 7 in., also the Puzzle Picture, and a Free Prize Certificate for our Money Prize Competition. Carriage abroad 1s. extra. Secure these wonderful Parcels at once. Two 2s. 6d Packets for 4s. 9d.; three for 6s. 6d.

KAZOO.—The Wonderful Instrument for imitating Punch and Judy, Cats' Concert, Birds, Cock-crowing, and every other animal or instrument played by anyone. Post-free, 1s.; three for 2s. 6d. Miniature Bagpipes, warranted to play, free, 1s. 2d. The new Mechanical Whistling Locomotive, 8 in. long, nickel silvered, whistles as it runs along, free, 1s. 6d. The little Dancing Devil, dances furiously, 1s. 3d. Twin Devils, 1s. 8d.

GRAND ILLUSTRATED CHRISTMAS CATALOGUE, with 600 Engravings, post-free, 1d. Novelties of every description imaginable. Special Catalogue of Steam-Engines and parts, 2d. Special Catalogue of Magic Lanterns, Slides, and Apparatus, 2d. Extra Special ditto, 200 pages, 8d.

J. THEOBALD and COMPANY

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READING FOR CHRISTMAS.

"Punch's Almanack"—in which the Spirit of Good-Humour personified by its cheery Editor, Mr. F. C. Burnand, is ever embodied, though his name does not appear—should serve to brighten the Christmas Holidays. Whilst this merry genius of *Punch* enlivens the pages with many quaint conceits and quips, Mr. John Tenniel worthily leads the van, artistically, with one of his exquisitely finished cartoons, "New London"; and Mr. Harry Furniss, Mr. Charles Keene, Mr. Du Maurier, and Mr. Linley Sambourne hit social follies as deftly as they do from week to week in *Punch*. One of the aptest and best of Christmas gifts, by-the-way, would be Miss Rosie Burnand's "Happy Thoughts" Birthday Book, being a choice selection from Mr. Burnand's inimitable "Happy Thoughts" for the year's round of birthdays. Miss Rosie Burnand has manifestly as keen a sense of humour as her witty father has.

* * * *

That droll creation, *Ally Sloper*, under the smart direction of Mr. Gilbert Dalziel, comes out with a rollicking Christmas Number, which is occasioning much mirth. It is Mr. W. F. Thomas who now delineates with richly comic *verve* the Bohemian frolics of the irrecleimable "Ally," Miss Tootsie, Dook Snook, Lord Bob, Lardi Longsox, Aunt Gweser, and Mrs. Sloper. This is the most diverting twopenn'orth of the season. Buy it!

* * * *

Moonshine so stanchly defends the Conservative Party in and out of its Christmas Number that its spicy Editor, Mr. Arthur Clements, doubtless finds the Carlton chiefs duly grateful. Mr. John Proctor, Mr. Alfred Bryan, and Mr. Horace Morehen provides cuts as cartoony and Christmassy as could be wished. The *Funny Folks'* Christmas Number is full of merriment.

* * * *

"Punchinella," the pretty replica of Sir John Millais's winsome painting, is the Coloured Supplement to the Christmas Number of the *Illustrated Sporting News*; and it may suggest many a piquante dress for Christmas Costume Balls. The Editor, Mr. Alfred E. T. Watson, displays afresh his well-grounded knowledge of the Turf in a rattling good racing tale, "A Good Thing"; whilst Mr. Arthur Clements tells in neat and sympathetic verse "The Story of a Sword," which every erudite member of the "Kernouzers' Club" will appreciate—as well as they will Mr. Frank Dadd's admirable Illustration of the same theme. Some decided home-truths are thrust at Father Christmas in the "Captious Critic's" contribution—crisp and trenchant text by Mr. Arthur Clements, and humorously ironic cuts by Mr. Alfred Bryan. Another of the most valued artistic contributors to the *S. and D.*, cheery and hearty John Sturgess, delights all lovers of horses with his bright and vigorous reminiscences of the good old coaching days in his fine spanking drawing of "Away! Away! 'Fresh Horses' are the word!" The black-and-white Illustrations generally are of exceptional interest; and altogether Mr. Walter Webbyn is to be congratulated upon his wreath of "Holly Leaves" for 1888.

* * * *

The clever and *chic* young authoress of the Egyptian tragedy of "Nitocris," Miss Clotilde Graves, pokes fun at long-haired Robert Louis Stevenson in the shilling romance of "The Pirate's Hand," embellished with attractive illustrations by MM. Bernard Partridge and Maurice Greiffenhagen. The "Penny Reading" season being in full fling, readers at these winter gatherings cannot do better than buy Mr. George S. Jealous's excellent shilling book, "The £5 Note; and Other Stories"—veritable gems in their way, expressly written by the author for recitation. It is illustrated by Mr. A. H. Tourrier; and is issued by Cassell and Co.

* * * *

A sumptuous and glowing production is the Christmas Number of the Paris *Figaro*, bright with many Coloured Prints. Those welcome missives of the season, Christmas Cards, improve every year. Quite to a Fine Art have MM. Hildesheimer and Co. and Messrs. Misch and Stock brought these gems for Christmas reminders.

Tobacconists Commencing.—See "Ill. Guide," post-free. Tobacconists' Co., 11, Beech-street, London, E.C.—[Advt.]

THE LATE JEM SELBY.

Everyone who had the pleasure of knowing the bright, ruddy, cheery "whip" of the "Old Times" Coach must have heard with sad surprise and deep regret of the sudden and early death of Mr. James Selby from heart disease and bronchitis—one of the curses of our climate. He breathed his last on Friday, Dec. 14; and his funeral in Highgate Cemetery on Wednesday was the occasion of a remarkable demonstration of esteem for Selby on the part of the numerous coaching fraternity.

JAMES SELBY'S GREAT FEAT

last summer is delineated in the present Number of *The Penny Illustrated Paper* in memoriam of this exceptionally popular "whip." We reproduce the original Drawing of the event by that famous equine Artist and jolly good fellow, Mr. John Sturgess. This spirited Illustration will recall, not only the achievement of Jem Selby, but also many a delightful coaching trip on Mr. Peter J. Rumney's well-horsed "Wonder" from Hatchett's to St. Albans and back in jovial company. The distance by road from Piccadilly, the "White Horse Cellars," to the Old Ship Hotel, Brighton, is fifty-four miles; it was done in 1837, by the Quicksilver mail, carrying the Queen's first Speech at the opening of Parliament, in three hours and forty minutes. His Majesty George IV., when Prince Regent, once drove it in four hours and a half. From London to Brighton and back in less than eight hours was a speed worthy of the "Old Times" coach, and of Mr. James Selby, its lamented driver. At the late Ascot race-meeting, the proprietors of this coach accepted a sporting bet of

£1000 to £500 that it could not be done.

They handsomely resolved to give Mr. Selby the £1000 if he won the bet. On Friday, July 13, this feat was successfully accomplished. The coach started at ten o'clock from Hatchett's Hotel, carrying six passengers—namely, Mr. M'Adam and Mr. Beckett, the owners, Mr. Carleton Blyth, Mr. Waller Dickson, Mr. W. P. Cosier, and Mr. Alfred Broadwood, with the guard, Walter Godden. It went down Grosvenor-place and along Buckingham Palace-road, over the Chelsea Suspension-bridge to Streatham, changed horses, then on to Croydon, Purley Bottom (change horses), Merstham, Redhill, Horley, Crawley, Cuckfield, Friars' Oak, and Patcham, changing teams at these and one or two other places. The run from Cuckfield (where Mr. John Sturgess sketched Jem Selby's spanking team) to Friars' Oak was done at a gallop. The coach arrived at the hospitable Old Ship, Brighton, at three minutes to 2 p.m., having accomplished the journey just under four hours. The stay at Brighton was only momentary, the horses were merely turned round, and a few telegrams handed up. The coach started homeward amidst hearty cheers, came back by the same route, and Selby brought his party safe to town in splendid style, arriving at Piccadilly at 5.50, or ten minutes under the stipulated time to win the bet.

CHARMING MUSIC
FOR
WINTER EVENINGS.

The hours will pass much more pleasantly with a mixture of music and song. Our world-famed MELODEONS, having Organ and Celestial tones, Patent Visible Double Valves, and the charming Bell accompaniments, are specially adapted for home music, Sacred Songs, Secular Songs, and Dance Music being rendered with equal effect. Anyone can play upon them.

Do you wish to enjoy your long evenings at home?
Then procure a MELODEON.
Do you wish to make your home circle happy?
Then procure a MELODEON.
Do you wish to arrange a concert or dancing party?
Then procure the most popular musical instrument of the day,

A MELODEON.

British Patent, No. 4492. German Patent, No. 24,110.
EVERYBODY DELIGHTED.
NO ONE DISSATISFIED.

THE "GEM" MELODEON
Is a Marvel of Cheapness.
THE "MINIATURE" MELODEON
is Selling in Thousands.
THE "FAVOURITE" MELODEON.
No Home should be Without One.

GRAND PRESENTATION MELODEONS.

GOOD NEWS!

BEST XMAS] WORTH DOUBLE. [PRESENT.

CUT OUT THIS.

P.I.] An Unparalleled Offer. [Paper.
OUR GRAND PRIZE MEDAL "GEM" MELODEON.
6s. 6d. 6s. 6d.
With Two Sets of Broad Reeds, Organ and Celestial Tone, sent carefully packed and carriage paid to any address in Great Britain and Ireland on receipt of P.O.O. for 6s. 6d. Worth Double.

CUT OUT THIS.

CHRISTMAS] WORTH DOUBLE. [PRESENTS.

CUT OUT THIS.

P.I.] An Unparalleled Offer. [Paper.
OUR GRAND PRIZE MEDAL "MINIATURE" MELODEON.
9s. 6d. 9s. 6d.
With Two Sets of Broad Reeds, Organ and Celestial Tone, and the charming Bell Accompaniments, sent, carefully packed and carriage paid, to any address in Great Britain and Ireland, on receipt of P.O.O. for 9s. 6d. Worth Double.

CUT OUT THIS.

CHRISTMAS] WORTH DOUBLE. [PRESENTS.

CUT OUT THIS.

P.I.] An Unparalleled Offer. [Paper.
OUR GRAND PRIZE MEDAL "FAVOURITE" MELODEON.
16s. 16s.
"By her Majesty's Royal Letters Patent," with Patent Visible Double Valves, two Stops, Organ and Celestial Tone, and charming Bell Accompaniments, sent, carefully packed and carriage paid, to any address in Great Britain and Ireland, on receipt of P.O.O. for 16s. Worth Double.

CUT OUT THIS.

NO DECEPTION HERE.

The Editor of the London *Weekly Times* says:—
"THE MELODEON.—No instrument invented of late can equal in power and sweetness the Melodeon. In external appearance it is a work of art, and in mechanism—for simplicity of handling, and for purity and variety of note—there is no instrument with which it can be compared."

TESTIMONIALS.

"27, Pembroke-street, Copenhagen-street, London, N.,
"Sept. 20, 1888.
"Dear Sir,—Just to say the instrument arrived quite safe on the 16th, which I am greatly obliged, also am glad to say that the last two or three instruments are much better in every way, I think you will soon make them for nothing, as the price is so small now. I am glad to say that no one can make them half so good for the amount. Wishing you good speed and great success for the coming year, and trust that these most beautiful instruments may be made known to everyone throughout the world.
"I am, dear Sir, yours truly, E. K. Cherry."

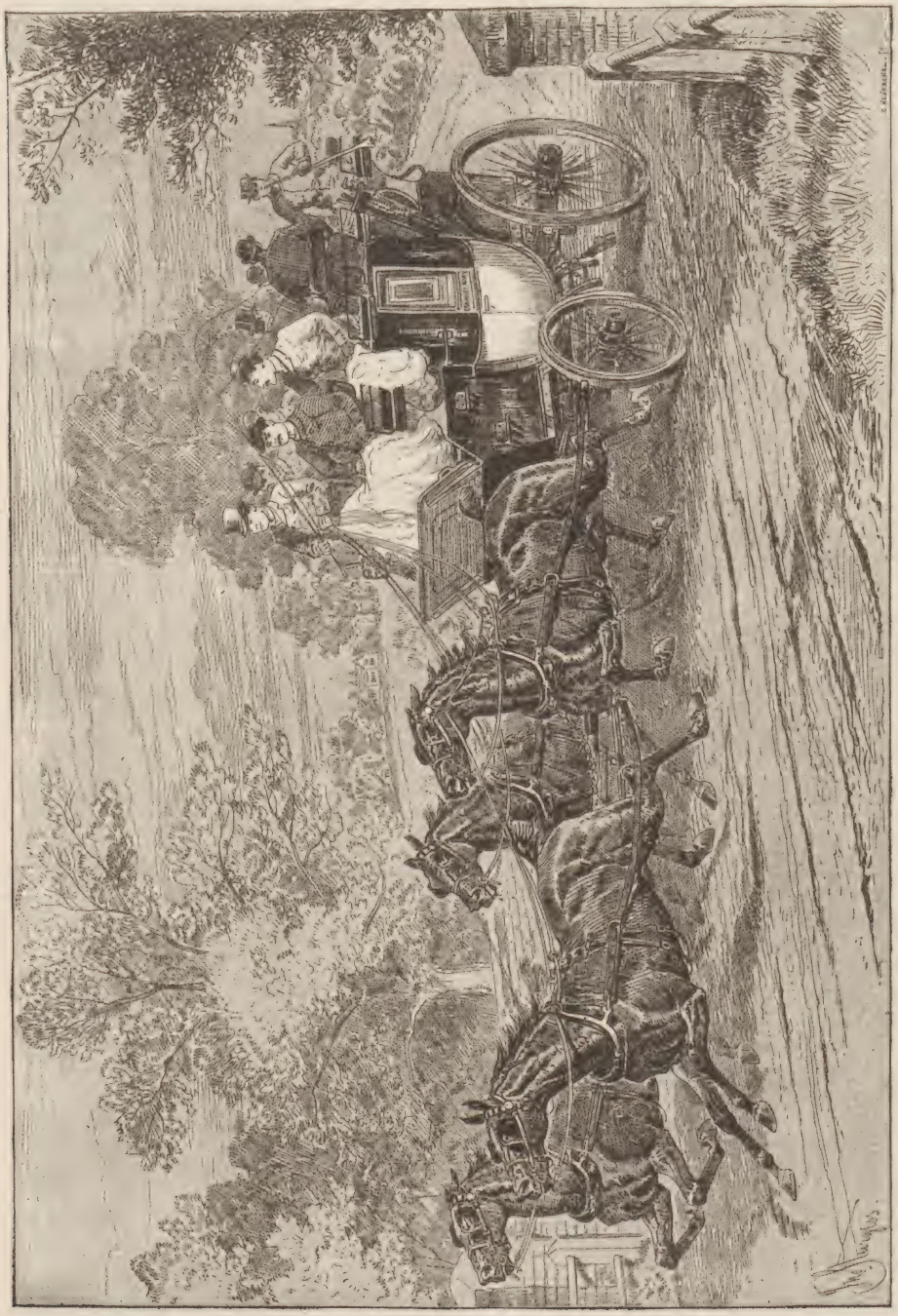
"4, Bank-terrace, Hornsea, Yorks, Sept. 22, 1888."
"Messrs. Campbell and Co.
"Sir,—Some time ago I had one of your 'Melodeons' presented to me after conducting some special services in Leicestershire. I kept it in constant use night after night for two years, sometimes at small and large meetings in singing, never having the slightest trouble with it. My wife, who assisted me in my evangelistic work, preferred it to accompany her solo-singing before any other instrument. I recommend it to many.
"I remain yours truly, H. Powers (Rev.),
Late Wesleyan Missionary."

"R. I. Constabulary, Templehouse, Co. Sligo, Ireland,
"Messrs. Campbell and Co. Sept. 13, 1888.
"Gentlemen,—Melodeon safely to hand this morning, with thanks. I candidly give my opinion of it: that, in neatness, cheapness, &c., it cannot be surpassed. I can couple my own opinion with that of my comrades, who say there is nothing short of being a paragon of perfection, all of whom are in a position to judge of such as a musical instrument. I shall spare no trouble in making known to my comrades and others the utility of your melodeon as a long winter night's companion.
"I remain yours respectfully, J. Shirley."

A MOST ASTOUNDING FACT.

One Hundred Thousand of our Patent Broad Reed Melodeons have been sold; and we have received the unprecedented number of One Hundred Thousand Testimonials and Press Notices from all parts of the World.

N.B.—Before purchasing a Musical Instrument of any other description, send for our NEW PRIVILEGE PRICE-LIST for 1889, now ready, entitling the holder to have any instruments mentioned in the List sent, carefully packed and carriage paid, to any address in Great Britain and Ireland, at the very low price quoted for each article. This valuable List contains numerous Illustrations of the leading and most popular Musical Instruments of the day, sent on receipt of one penny stamp to CAMPBELL and CO., Musical Instrument Makers, 116, Trongate, Glasgow.



IN MEMORIAM: THE LATE JEM SELBY'S GREAT COACHING FEAT: LONDON TO BRIGHTON AND BACK UNDER EIGHT HOURS, FRIDAY, JULY 13, 1888.

IN MEMORIAM: THE LATE JEM SELBY'S GREAT COACHING FEAT: LONDON TO BRIGHTON AND BACK UNDER EIGHT HOURS, FRIDAY, JULY 13, 1888.

THE SHOWMAN.

Ladies and Gentlemen,—

Good Old Father Christmas! We always cordially welcome him in our Show. So does every right-minded Briton. Ye should see how Prince Bonhomme, Princess Sweeteyes and family—we wish *them* a very Happy Christmas with all our hearts—throw themselves into "Dumb Crambo" and Charades, "What are my Thoughts like?" "Family Coach," and other Christmas Games at their Sandringham Home—not forgetting plenty of the Roast Beef of Old England and Plum-Pudding and Norfolk ale for their humble tenants. The same glad-hearted spirit animates all English homes worthy the name of home. Season of Holly and Mistletoe, of generous giving and of opportune Christmas-Boxes, we warmly greet your return! Sure we are that when the Fog Demon raises his ebon siege of London, the wintry air will be frostily clear, there will be snowballing and skating galore, and the Christmas Transformation Scenes will brighten many eyes and bring bread to many, many of the residuum of the Army of Pleasure.

Friends, being a thorough believer in Christmas, I began its celebration betimes. Ye might have twigged me snugly ensconced next "Carados" at the Dress Rehearsal of "Irene"—the Alhambra's masterpiece. Go and see it! I own to having paused, with other Old Boys, to admire the Pantomime masks in Clarkson's windows, and at the theatrical emporium of the great Fox. I frankly confess my liking for "All the Fun of the Fair," with my old friend Blondin to crown it, at the Agricultural Hall in Islington; and even "Ally Sloper" doesn't exceed me in my adoration of the fair stall-keepers at the Olympia Winter Exhibition—grandest Christmas Bazaar London has ever seen. As to the industrious and skilful costumiers, they are wonderfully busy now with devising and making historic

costumes for Colonel North's Fancy Dress Ball—the most magnificent fête, as it promises to be, of the New Year. "What to wear?" has been the puzzle of the Society toffs and Stock Exchange magnates honoured with invitations to Colonel and Mrs. North's great Costume Ball.

But here's dear old Harry Payne, the Gentleman Clown, cheerily calling out, "A Merry Christmas to ye!" Same to yew, dear boy, and "many of 'em"! I pay homage to King Pantomime with the greatest pleasure. What fitter playhouse to do it in than Old Drury, the National Theatre, whose rafters have rung with the peals of laughter Tom Matthews drew forth by his drollery, and whose spacious stage can never have boasted so supremely skilful a Generalissimo as Augustus Harris. D'ye recognise Augustus Druriolanus in the foreground yonder? I interviewed him on your behalf t' other day. The wonderful man was in full rehearsal—was, in short, ubiquitous. On Boxing Night, as many of ye as can squeeze yourselves into Old Drury will see how order has been evolved out of Chaos. But ye would never imagine how it could be done were ye but to get a glimpse of Confusion worse Confounded behind the scenes a fortnight before Christmas Day.

"The Babes in the Wood!" "Babes up a Tree!" would seem to be a more appropriate title for the Drury-Lane Pantomime. Depend upon Gus, however, to disentangle the most complicated skeins. Glance at him as he infuses some of his dramatic "vim" and "go" into yon pretty leading lady in scarlet cloak. Acknowledge his patience as he watches the apparently slow, easy, and lackadaisical manner in which London's favourites, Harry Nicholls and Herbert Campbell, elaborate in mufti (both in pot hats) the comic business, which is soon to set us roaring. These two arch comedians, Past Masters of the Eagle, are, with accustomed feeling, to enact the parts of the poor Babes. Handsome Harriett Vernon forsakes the black tights of Sappho for a rôle at "the Lane." I cannot tell ye how many other clever pantomimic artistes altogether are to co-operate with nimble Dan Leno, Harry Nicholls, Herbert Campbell. But I know ye will be glad to accord smart and agile Charles Lauri the Younger a round of cheers; and will not be sparing in applause either to Victor Stevens, Reuben Inch, the Griffiths Brothers, comely Florence Dysart, sweetly songful Sybil Grey, and Juno Duggan (a "fine figger of a woman," and no mistake!).

Drury-Lane's imperial manager rehearses his ballet on the stage of the Empire Theatre. We follow him, Short and I, to that house of dazzling light—shrouded in brown holland this afternoon. 'Tis on the stage of the Empire that 'Gus superintends, with the adroitness of a Casati, the evolutions of his grand Bird Ballet (which is to be one of the grand features of "The Babes in the Wood"). He can even impart a "wrinkle" to Madame Katti Lanner. 'Gus looks not unlike a beaming Sir Roger de Coverley as he dexterously pirouettes down the stage just to give Katti an idea of how he wishes it to be done. Katti seizes his notion in a minute. Behold the popular Ballet-Mistress demonstrating before the befurred 'Gussy (seated to recover breath) her mastery of the tomtit *pas* he has taught her; the little lasses following suit. My eyes! Won't ye be dazzled when the glories of this Bird Ballet are are unfolded! Birds of Paradise, Canaries, Spanish-hens, Cockatoos, and "Birds of a Feather" will exhibit their plumages and talents in "The Babes in the Wood." In the centre of the stage, we recognise lissom little Mdlle. Ænea practising her aerial flights—surely, to transform herself into an Augustan Baldwin on Boxing Night. Hieing back to Drury Lane, we find indefatigable Walter Slaughter in his leafy orchestra, turning over his leaves of music, and skilfully conducting chorus and band. My excellent friend Slaughter has a tuneful comic opera of his own up his sleeve (composed to the libretto of Mr. Lewis Clifton and Mr. Joseph Dilley); and I hope this lyric play may see the footlights, and enjoy a good run early in the new year at a suitable theatre. Meantime, Walter Slaughter devotes himself heart and soul to the music of "The Babes in the Wood." Good luck to them! Good luck also, and a Happy Christmas to one and all our friends and patrons! CODLIN.

Sport.

CHRISTMAS

will find plenty of sport provided—weather permitting—to keep the game of life briskly going. If Fox-terrier coursing be your fancy, there is the Hornsey Club Meeting on Boxing Day. Hockey? Surbiton v. Ditton, at Surbiton, the same day. Pigeon-shooting? A match is to take place at the International Gun and Polo Club Ground, Hendon, on Monday next, between Mr. Walter Blake and Captain Brewer, the terms being to compete for £100 a side, at fifty birds each, the American conceding his opponent three yards, their respective distances being thirty and thirty-three yards rise. There will be football and pedestrianism galore. The following are the remaining

DECEMBER RACING FIXTURES.

Windsor ...	21, 22	Four Oaks ...	26, 27
East Riding Club	26	Kempton Park	26, 27
Leopardstown ...	26	Plumpton ...	28, 29

EXCURSIONS FROM MANCHESTER,

Leeds, Sheffield, and Scarborough are promised to the East Riding Club Meeting at Hull, on Boxing Day.

BOXING NIGHT

has been so far anticipated in town that there have been ever so many boxing bouts this December. Frank Hinde's successful week of glove-fighting at the Aquarium Theatre has been succeeded by a "fizzle" at Her Majesty's; and on Monday last, Ned Donnelly took up the sparring, Harry Osborne leading off by beating Jack Stevens. The same Monday night, at Bob Kirby's Lambeth School of Arms, Alf Suffolk had the best of a brisk encounter with Tom Shields for £50.

THE GERMAN GYMNASIUM,

near King's-cross, has furnished the most interesting series of boxing-matches; the programme being so large that the contests could not be concluded on Wednesday week, the finals having to be adjourned for the Wednesday evening of the present week—Mr. C. P. Young being the guiding spirit. The German Gymnasium—the most excellently managed and most commodious institution of the kind in London—should be joined by every young man wishful to develop his frame and muscles, and to acquire that sound physical health and agility without which the brain cannot properly perform its functions. Since the German Gymnasium, started in a loft of which we have many agreeable remembrances, first offered to the youth of London a rational and comprehensive plan of muscular education, imparted by willing and skilful teachers of the broad-shouldered type of Ravenstein and Schweitzer, several similar establishments have been opened in London; but the German Gymnasium still worthily maintains its pre-eminence. Membership comes as a boon and a blessing to every lad of good constitution. How pluckily and neatly the members can box has been amply proved in the December Boxing "Tournament," which has had no more enthusiastic admirer than the staunch champion of boxing, Mr. Henry Sampson, "Pendragon," whom we are heartily glad to see out and about again, frank and hearty as of old.

DIVER v. OCTOPUS.

A man named Alexander McGovan, engaged in the Wellington (New Zealand) harbour improvement works, has had a remarkable encounter with an octopus. The information is dated the 3rd ult., and says that McGovan went down in his diving-dress for the purpose of setting some large blocks under the water in which piles had been previously driven. As McGovan was in the act of placing one of the blocks he was seized by an immense octopus. The monster fastened on to the piles at the same time. McGovan at first made an attempt to get clear, but the more he fought with the octopus the more he found that it was useless, as its grip became stronger. He then wisely desisted, and in a few moments had the satisfaction of knowing that the octopus had released its grasp of the piles. This was no sooner done than McGovan gave the signal to be hauled up. His signals were quickly responded to, and up went the diver with the creature on his back. Its legs measured nine feet long. McGovan certainly had a narrow escape, and it was only by his discreet quietness that he turned the tables on the octopus. It is said that there are a number of this particular kind of fish in the harbour of Wellington.

THE MURIETTAS' HUNTERS.

The disposal of the hunters the property of Mr. C. J. De Murietta and Mr. F. De Murietta was the chief feature of Messrs. Tattersall's sale at Knightsbridge on Monday, and capital prices were realised for most of them. All ran into three figures, four realising over 300 gs. each. A few thoroughbreds were sent up by Mr. C. C. Dormer, and two—Aldford and Suart—were taken by Mr. A. Yates, with a view doubtless of being turned to account in races under G.N.H. rules.

WHAT PRICE—GREYHOUNDS?

The best sale of greyhounds on record took place last Saturday at the Barbican Repository, presided over by Mr. Herbert Rymill, when the gallery was crowded with coursers, and sensational prices were realised. The auctioneer stated that Mr. Dent was giving up coursing for a time, but the vender reserved to himself the right to bid, while Mr. C. Hibbert's kennel would be sold without reserve. The crack puppy Fullerton was sold to Colonel North for 850 guineas, and Bit o' Fashion to the same owner for 200 guineas. Miss Glendyne was bought by Mr. Brisco for Colonel North at 510 guineas. Huic Holloa, Jester, and Cui Malo were bought in for 350 guineas, 190 guineas, and 25 guineas.

THE DUKE OF PORTLAND

was on Newmarket Heath on Monday while the horses under the care of G. Dawson were exercising, and Sir M. FitzGerald (one of the stable patrons) witnessed the gallops over hurdles of several of J. Cannon's team.

TO ARTHUR SHREWSBURY.

There was a representative gathering at the Exchange Hall, Nottingham, on Saturday last, when a presentation was made to Arthur Shrewsbury, the famous Notts cricketer. It consisted of a purse of gold amounting to £72, and an illuminated address in book form, in recognition of his wonderful batting average of 78·15 for the season of 1887.

THE FIRST SURREY RIFLES

held their twenty-ninth annual assault-at-arms at their head-quarters, Flodden-road, Camberwell, last Saturday evening. Features of the evening's entertainment were the spirited illustration of the bayonet exercise by a squad of the regiment under Colour-Sergeant T. W. Townsend, and the sword-bayonet, cutlass, and stick exercises performed by members of No. 2 Battery Royal Naval Artillery Volunteers.

HAYDOCK PARK

Meeting entertained coursers at the beginning of the week.

BILLIARDS.

The 9000-up spot-barred match in which Taylor and M'Neil were engaged during last week, was brought to a close at the Westminster Aquarium last Saturday. Taylor won easily, by 1863 points.

MARVELLOUS BREAKS.

W. Mitchell and F. White began a notable match on Monday at the Aquarium. Some extraordinary play was witnessed on Tuesday afternoon, when these professionals resumed their match of 15,000 up for £200 a side. Overnight White, by means of a 997 break, had reached 5831 to Mitchell's 2407. On Tuesday the room was crowded, and Mitchell delighted the onlookers by following up 188 with a grand break of 1310 (435 spots). But on Tuesday evening White fairly monopolised the table, and playing in magnificent form, with breaks of 143 (45 spots) and 1579 unfinished (25, 108, and 371 spots), left off with a substantial advantage, closing scores at night being:—White, 7666, Mitchell, 3952.

FOOTBALL.

NORTH V. SOUTH.

The seventeenth annual encounter between representative Rugby teams from the North and South was decided on the ground of the Blackheath Club last Saturday, and ended in a victory for the Northerners by two goals to a try. The weather was as miserable as it possibly could be, a heavy fog hanging over the field, the players at times being indistinguishable This undoubtedly interfered with the attendance, only 4000 putting in an appearance.

LAST SATURDAY'S MATCHES: RUGBY RULES.

Maoris beat Broughton, at Broughton, by two goals two tries to nil.
Bradford beat Dewsbury, at Dewsbury, by two tries to one try.
Wakefield Trinity beat Hull, at Wakefield, by one goal three tries to one try.
Swinton beat Wigan, at Swinton, by two goals and a try to nil.
Salford beat Burton-on-Trent, at Salford, by a goal to a try.
Oxford University played a draw with Edinburgh Academicals, at Edinburgh, each side scoring a try.
Manchester beat Birkenhead Park, at Whalley Range, by two tries to nil.
Halifax beat Leeds Parish Church, at Leeds, by one try to nil.
Devon played a draw with Gloucester, at Exeter, two tries each.
Manningham beat Northern, at Manningham, by four goals one try to nil.
Newport beat Bridgwater, at Newport, by one goal three tries to nil.
East Lancashire beat East Cheshire, at Stockport, by one try to nil.
Brighton beat Catford Bridge, at Brighton, by one goal three tries to nil.
Cambridge University beat Landsdowne (Dublin), at Dublin, by three goals to nil.
Victoria University (Manchester) beat Northamptonshire, at Kettering, by two goals to a try.

ASSOCIATION RULES.

West-End beat London Caledonians, at Shepherd's-bush, by two goals to one.
Celtic beat East Stirlingshire, at Falkirk, by two goals to one.
Hampshire beat Berks and Bucks, at Winchester, by two goals to one.
Staffordshire beat Sheffield, at Sheffield, by six goals to two.
Staffordshire beat Durham, at Sunderland, by five goals to nil.
Bolton Wanderers beat Sunderland, at Bolton, by ten goals to one.
Dublin University beat Liverpool Ramblers, at Dublin, by three goals to two.

LEAGUE MATCHES.

Wolverhampton Wanderers beat West Bromwich Albion, at Wolverhampton, by two goals to one.
Blackburn Rovers beat Notts County, at Blackburn, by five goals to two.
Preston North-End v. Burnley, at Burnley, a draw.
Accrington v. Aston Villa, at Accrington, a draw.
Stoke v. Everton, at Stoke, a draw.

ASSOCIATION CHALLENGE CUP.

Chatham beat Crusaders, at West Kensington, by three goals to two, tie replayed.
Linfield Athletic v. Cliftonville, at Belfast, a draw (three goals each), tie replayed.

LONDON ASSOCIATION CHARITY CUP.

Old St. Paul's beat Old Etonians, at Stratford, by four goals to three, tie replayed.

LONDON ASSOCIATION SENIOR CUP.

Casuals beat Old Westminsters, at Leyton, by three goals to nil, fourth round.

MONDAY'S MATCHES.

At Park Avenue Cambridge met Bradford, who again lowered their colours by a goal and a try to nil. The Oxonians also fell before Manchester, who beat them at Whalley Range by a goal and a try to a goal; but the dark blue Association team was elsewhere more successful, defeating the Royal Engineers at Chatham by six goals to none, whereas Aston Villa overcame the Cantabs, at Perry Bar, by five goals to one. The New Zealanders met Wigan on the latter's ground, before 8000 spectators, and won by a gaol and two tries to a try; while of the matches in or near London, the Old Etonians beat the Guards' Dépôt, at Caterham, by nine goals to one; the East Surrey Wanderers and Casuals playing a draw of two goals each at Upper Tooting. Moseley met with defeat from Rochdale Hornets by a try to nil, while Shrewsbury School was beaten by the Old Salopians by three goals to two.

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"Portmore House, Weybridge.—Dear Sir,—Since wearin... Electropathic Belt my health has been better in every... would not like to be without it. Before I wore the Bel... such pain every month from my waist to the knees,... went to my head and affected my eyesight for a little... am happy to say these pains have never returned. I tri... of medicine with no good results, but from wearing y... pathic Belt I am now in the best of health, and cannot... too much for it.—Yours truly, H. Jones.

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PARALYSIS.—ROBERT ROTHWELL, Esq., 9, Co... Hulme, Manchester, June 8, 1888, writes:—"I... Belt my father purchased for loss of nerve power and pa... made a new man of him, and it was only the other day th... me he would have been in his grave long ago if it had n... your valuable Electropathic treatment."

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"Cease, every joy to glimmer on my mind,
But leave, oh! leave the light of hope behind!"

"Oh! who would pique himself on mind, whose use
Depends so much upon the gastric juice?"

THE STUDY OF THE STOMACH IS THE STUDY OF MORALITY.

THE

FESTIVE SEASON.

Experience shows that porter, mild ales, port wine, dark sherries, sweet champagne, liqueurs, and brandies are all apt to disagree, while light white wines, and gin or whisky, largely diluted with soda-water, will be found the least objectionable. ENO'S "FRUIT SALT" is particularly adapted for any constitutional weakness of the liver; it possesses the power of reparation when digestion has been disturbed or lost, and places the invalid on the right track to health. A world of woe is avoided by those who keep ENO'S "FRUIT SALT" and ENO'S "VEGETABLE MOTO;" therefore, no family should ever be without them.

"The goose and apple-sauce is orf, Sir."

He had been looking forward to a dainty little dinner, and now a frost—a killing frost—has come upon his hopes.

"So highly do I value your composition that, when taking it, I grudge even the sediment that will always remain at the bottom of the glass. I give, therefore, the following advice to those wise persons who have learned to appreciate its inestimable benefits—

When Eno's Salt betimes you take | But drain the dregs, and lick the cup
No waste of this Elixer make; | Of this, the perfect pick-me-up."

WRITING again on Jan. 21, 1888, he adds:—"Dear Sir,—A year or two ago I addressed you in grateful recognition of the never-failing virtues of your world-famed remedy. The same old man in the same strain now salutes you with the following—

When Time, who steals our years away, | Eno's Fruit Salt will prove our stay,
Shall steal our pleasures too, | And still our health renew."

"MODERATION IS THE SILKEN STRING RUNNING THROUGH THE PEARL CHAIN OF ALL VIRTUES."—BISHOP HALL.

DRAWING AN OVERDRAUGHT ON THE BANK OF LIFE.—Late hours, fagged, unnatural excitement, breathing impure air, too rich food, alcoholic drink, gouty, rheumatic, and other blood poisons, feverish colds, biliousness, sick headache, skin eruptions, pimples on the face, want of appetite, sourness of stomach, &c.—Use ENO'S "FRUIT SALT." It is pleasant, cooling, health-giving, refreshing, and invigorating. You cannot overstate its great value in keeping the blood pure and free from disease.

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PREPARED ONLY AT ENO'S "FRUIT SALT" WORKS, HATCHAM, LONDON, S.E., BY J. C. ENO'S PATENT.

TO AID NATURE in CHILDHOOD, MIDDLE AGE, or ADVANCED LIFE, without force or strain, use **ENO'S "VEGETABLE MOTO"** (a simple Vegetable Extract), occasionally a desirable adjunct to **ENO'S "FRUIT SALT."** They perform their work "silently as the twilight comes when the day is done"; and the patient is much astonished to find his bilious attack, &c., has completely fled before the simple and natural onslaught of the "MOTO." You cannot overstate their great value in keeping the Blood pure and preventing disease.

ENO'S "VEGETABLE MOTO." [TRADE MARK.]

IMPORTANT TO ALL LEAVING HOME FOR A CHANGE.—ENO'S "FRUIT SALT" AND ENO'S "VEGETABLE MOTO" ought to be kept in every house and every travelling-trunk, in readiness for any emergency.

DISORDERED STOMACH, SEASIDE AND BILIOUS ATTACKS.

A GENTLEMAN writes: "Dec. 27, 1887.—After twelve months' experience of the value of the 'VEGETABLE MOTO,' I unhesitatingly recommend their use in preference to any other medicine, more particularly in bilious attacks; their action is so gentle and yet so effective that nothing equals them in my opinion. They have never failed to give the wished-for relief. I take them at any hour, and frequently in conjunction with a small glass of ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT.'—Yours gratefully, ONE WHO KNOWS."

ENO'S "VEGETABLE MOTO," of all Chemists, price 1s. 1½d.; post-free, 1s. 3d.

PREPARED ONLY AT ENO'S "FRUIT SALT" WORKS, LONDON, S.E.

BUY NONE BUT ENGLISH WATCHES OF THE BEST LONDON MAKE.

BENSON'S PATENT ¾-PLATE ENGLISH LEVER "LUDGATE" WATCHES

Are the Cheapest and Best ever made at the price. No firm in England can equal them.

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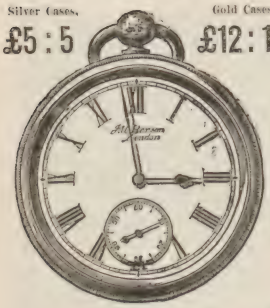
Silver Cases, £5 : 5 — Gold Cases, £12 : 12



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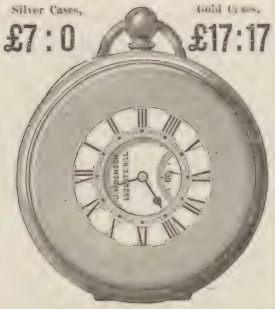

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DESCRIPTION.—THREE-QUARTER PLATE ENGLISH LEVER WATCH (Patent No. 4658), of BEST LONDON MAKE, with Chronometer Balance, Jewelled throughout, and Patent Protection from Dust and Damp. Keeps better time than, and is double the strength and value of, any English Watch made at the price. Made in Four Sizes at the same price:—Ladies, Gentlemen and Youths, Working Men generally, and specially large and strong for Miners and Railway Men. In extra Strong Sterling Silver Crystal Glass Cases, **£5 5s.**; or, in 18-carat Gold Crystal Glass Cases, Gentleman's Size, **£12 12s.**; Lady's Size, **£10 10s.** WITH KEYLESS ACTION, Silver, **£8 8s.**; Gold, **£20.**

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MR. A. E. TUDOR, Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment, Wady Halfa, Soudan, writes:—"I have had it four months in the Soudan, where sand is continually blowing about, and none has penetrated through the joints or any part of the Watch. From the time I received it the variation has been about one minute. Its durability is simply marvellous."

A MOST USEFUL CHRISTMAS OR BIRTHDAY PRESENT.

Any of these Watches sent, Free and Safe at My Risk, to all Parts of the World, on receipt of Cash, Draft, or P.O.O., payable at G.P.O.

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QUEEN'S WATCHMAKER

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THE STEAM FACTORY:

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Fry's Pure Cocoa

PURE CONCENTRATED SOLUBLE COCOA

Prepared by a new and special scientific process, securing extreme solubility, and developing the finest flavour of the Cocoa.

From Sir CHAS. A. CAMERON, M.D.,
President of the Royal College of Surgeons, Ireland, &c.

"I have never tasted Cocoa that I like so well. IT IS ESPECIALLY ADAPTED TO THOSE WHOSE DIGESTIVE ORGANS ARE WEAK, and I strongly recommend it as a substitute for tea for young persons."

From W. H. STANLEY, M.D., &c.

"I consider it a very rich delicious Cocoa. It is highly concentrated, and therefore economical as a family food. It is the drink *par excellence* for children, and gives no trouble in making."

When buying Cocoa be careful to ask for **"FRY'S PURE CONCENTRATED COCOA."**

FRY'S CHOCOLATE FOR EATING.

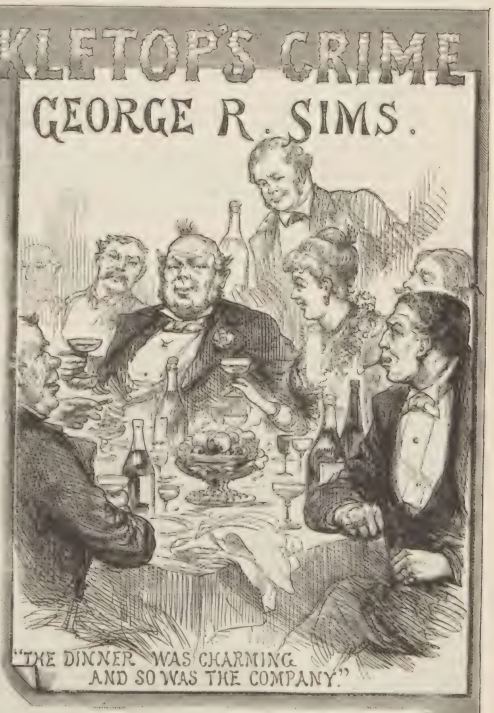
Egyptian Creams, Italian Pralines, Nougat Sticks, Tangerine Biscuits, Chocolate Soufflet, Fruit Jellies, are not only delicious, but also highly nutritious and sustaining, and being exceedingly wholesome, are universal favourites.

MAKERS TO THE QUEEN AND PRINCE OF WALES; THIRTY-SIX PRIZE MEDALS AWARDED TO THE FIRM.

MR. GEORGE R. SIMS,
"DAGONET," AUTHOR OF "LIGHTS O' LONDON," &c.
From the Photograph by Alexander Bassano, 25, Old Bond street.

TINKLETOP'S CRIME

BY GEORGE R. SIMS.



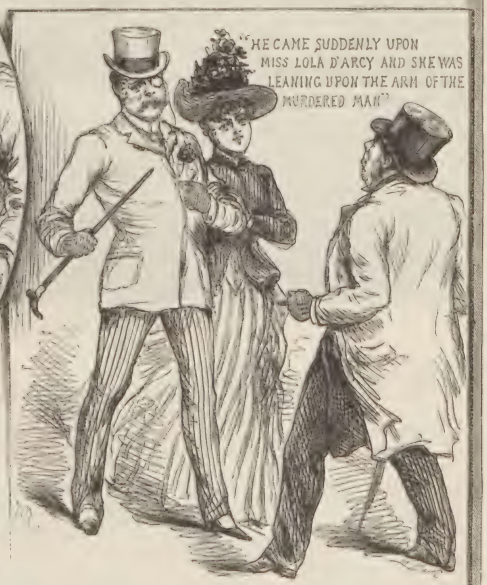
"THE DINNER WAS CHARMING. AND SO WAS THE COMPANY."

MR. JEREMIAH TINKLETOP was a very nice old gentleman. He had commenced life as a stable-boy; he had acquired an extensive and peculiar knowledge of life in an atmosphere redolent of artfulness; he had drifted on to the turf, first as tout and runner to a bookmaker, then he had become the bookmaker's clerk, and then the bookmaker's partner, and eventually he had finished up by being a bookmaker absolutely on his own account. In the practice of his calling he had acquired a large fortune, and having come to sixty years of age without experiencing the tender passion, he had settled down into the typical nice old boy—fond of a good dinner, fond of good company, and ever ready to beam on those around him with that benevolent smile which is so easy when you have a good balance at the bank and a large fortune safely invested in sound securities.

Everybody liked "Old Jerry Tinkletop," as he was familiarly called,

"Good old Tinkletop" the young fellows always said when they spoke about him. Ever ready with a kindly word, and never backward in putting his hand in his pocket for a deserving case, what wonder that he was a popular old gentleman, and much run after by the people who are always hanging about the residence of Dives on the look-out for crumbs?

Having said all this in Tinkletop's favour, I am compelled by the necessities of my narrative to say a little on the other side. But if I show Mr. Tinkletop in a light which would not recommend him to the Archbishop of Canterbury as a bosom friend, I do so with a full sense of my responsibility. Parents who read this true story aloud to their children will, I am sure, be gratified by its moral; for its moral is irreproachable. Mr. Tinkletop—he was old enough to know better—occasionally kept doubtful company. It was very wrong of him; but look at the bringing up which he had and the whole surroundings of his life! Don't imagine for one moment that I am attempting to defend him. On the contrary, I am going to show what happened to him in consequence



of his keeping doubtful company in order that it may be a warning to all old gentlemen of the same age.

When I say "doubtful" company I do not wish to be misunderstood. Where I think Tinkletop was wrong—and I have argued the matter out with some of the best men in the country who knew him—was in allowing fighting men, boxing men, and the inferior kind of racing

men to be too familiar with him. He should have kept them at their distance.

If he had become a churchwarden or a vestryman, and interested himself in parochial matters, he might have passed his evenings in very different company.

Still, we know that Fate moves in a very mysterious way, and it is quite possible that Mr. Tinkletop was meant to do as he did in order to "point a moral and adorn a tale."

One evening, then—the date is quite unnecessary—Mr. Tinkletop having been invited to join a nice little party at a famous restaurant, which has gorgeous rooms up-stairs and a café and a bar below, put on his dress-coat, placed a beautiful "malmaison" in his button-hole, and sallied forth.

The dinner was charming, and so was the company. There was Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines and Mrs. Jinks; and Tom Cobblestone, the gentleman who had begun life as a 'bus-driver and was now the owner of a score of racehorses and the luckiest man on the turf; there was Professor Pot Walloper, the celebrated master of the noble art of self-defence, who taught all the nobility how to box; there was young Lord De Juggins, who had just inherited a couple of millions and the title from his grandfather; there was Miss Lola D'Arcy, a charmingly pretty songstress out of an engagement for the moment in consequence of the Frivolity season being over; and there was her brother, Jack Smith, whose occupation was unknown to anyone but himself. Besides these there were several ladies and gentlemen who were less known to fame, but they were all excellent company.

Tinkletop sat next to Miss D'Arcy, and he thought she was very charming. She was very nice and affable, and her conversation was bright and cheery, and she didn't snub Tinkletop in the least because he was old.

As the dinner progressed the good-fellowship increased all round, and a happier, merrier party never assembled under the roof of the famous restaurant.

When dinner was over the company began to separate. Some had engagements elsewhere. Some were going to the theatre and others to their clubs. Presently Miss D'Arcy and Tinkletop, and Professor Pot Walloper and Miss D'Arcy's brother were the only ones left at the table.

Suddenly Tinkletop had an idea.

"Let's all go to the opera?" he said; "I'll take a box. It's 'Faust' to-night, and they say Gus Harris has put it on A 1."

A CHRISTMAS CATASTROPHE: THE PREMISES.

"Oh, I should like it immensely!" said Miss D'Arcy. "The De Reszkés are splendid. Shall we go, Jack?"

"Certainly," replied Jack; "you three go first, and I'll follow you."

"Right, my boy!" exclaimed Tinkletop, delighted.

He thought an evening at the opera, with the pleasure of Miss D'Arcy's society, would be magnificent; and he was quite radiant with dinner and delight when he rose to get his overcoat.

Jack, the brother of Miss D'Arcy, had gone out of the room; Miss D'Arcy was just going to get her cloak; and Professor Walloper was pouring the Chartreuse into his coffee-cup, as he found the liqueur-glass so absurdly small to drink out of, when there entered suddenly a handsome young gentleman in faultless evening dress.

Miss D'Arcy started.

"Oh, Captain Jones!" she said. "I am so sorry. I'd forgotten all about you."

"I thought so," replied the Captain. "I met your brother outside, and he told me you were here. Are you ready?"

"Quite ready," said Miss D'Arcy. Then, turning to Tinkletop, she said with a sweet smile, "I'm so sorry, Mr. Tinkletop; but I'd quite forgotten that I'd promised to go to the Lyceum, this evening, with Captain Jones. It's all Jack's fault—he ought to have reminded me."

Another smile, a little nod of the head, and the vision of beauty had gone—and so had Captain Jones!

Tinkletop fell back heavily into a chair, one arm in his overcoat and the other arm out.

"Well!" he yelled; "of all the cool impudence! The idea of that fellow daring to walk in here and take Miss D'Arcy off before my very eyes!"

"Why didn't you give him one over the nose?" said Professor Walloper, putting half a dozen big cigars into his pocket.

"Why didn't I?" exclaimed Mr. Tinkletop, almost in a white heat with rage, "because I'm old enough to be his father, and my boxing days are over. But I'd give a hundred to have been young enough to do it."

"Give a tenner," said the Professor, "and somebody else 'll do the job for you."

"Give a tenner to have that fellow taught manners? Wouldn't I! Rather!"

"Give us your tenner," said the Professor, "and consider it's done."

"No violence!" exclaimed Tinkletop, as he put his hand in his waistcoat pocket.

"Lor' bless you, no. Look here: you just want his hat knocked over his eyes and his shirt-front spoilt, to teach him not to be so jolly fast a-coming into private rooms and taking the company away. That's it, aint it?

"Yes," said Tinkletop, "that's it. Make him look ridiculous in Miss D'Arcy's eyes, that's all."

"Don't you fidget yourself," said the Professor, grabbing the tenner from the hesitating fingers of Mr. Tinkletop, "it's only a little lesson he'll get. There's two or three of the division down-stairs that'll be glad of the job, and do it well."

Professor Walloper stuffed the note into his pocket and went down-stairs, leaving Tinkletop alone with the head waiter, who had just come in with the bill, the rest of the company—including the donor of the dinner—having quite forgotten that it wasn't settled.

When Tinkletop went down-stairs he met the Professor standing in the doorway.

"It's all right, Guv'nor," said Walloper, "the three chaps I've given the office to are gone to the Lyceum. They know their man, and when he comes out they'll give him a little lesson in good manners."

Mr. Tinkletop said nothing, but went off home in a very bad temper. Long before he reached his residence he was sorry that he had said anything to Walloper at all. Suppose the three roughs hurt the young fellow! Oh, nonsense; he wasn't going to worry himself about that. He had three whiskies and five pipes and went to bed and had an exceedingly bad night; for he dreamt that he was standing at the altar with Miss D'Arcy, who was just about to say "I will," and become Mrs. Tinkletop, when a young fellow came up from a trap in the floor, and, seizing her, bore her away through the roof before his very eyes.

* * * * *

About half-past ten the next morning Mr. Tinkletop was having his breakfast when the servant came in and said that a gentleman wanted to see him on a very important matter.

"Show him in," said Tinkletop.

The gentleman came in, and proved to be Professor Walloper.

The Professor's features were distorted with anxiety.

"Good Heavens, Walloper!" shrieked Tinkletop, as he saw the expression of the Professor's face, "what's the matter? There was no—no mischief done last night, was there?"

"No," replied the Professor, his voice gruff and gloomy, and his face as long as a farthing kite, "no mischief; only them blessed fools went and killed the Capting, that's all."

"What! No, no! You have not come here to tell me the poor young fellow is dead?"

A CHRISTMAS CATASTROPHE: THE CONSEQUENCES.

The Professor shrugged his shoulders. "That's the size of it, Guv'nor," he said. "They hit him on the 'ed as he was going along the Embankment, meaning only to bash his hat in, and he went down like a log, and when they felt his 'eart he was dead. It's a very orful thing."

"Awful!" exclaimed Tinkletop, mopping his brow, "it's terrible! it's ruin—ruin to us all!"

"Oh, I don't know about that," said the Professor; "it mightn't come to hanging, if we're careful."

"Hanging! Oh, don't, don't!" moaned Tinkletop, as he buried his face in his hands; "have the—the police—found the body?"

"No; not yet. My chaps tied a brick round the Capting's neck, and threw him into the river."

"Oh dear, oh dear!" gasped the old gentleman, "how shocking! That makes it look like a deliberate crime. Poor young fellow! I wouldn't have had it happen for twenty thousand pounds."

"Well, what are you going to do?"

"I—er—I don't know. I'm overwhelmed. Help me to think."

"Well, you see, it's like this. You're all right if it never comes out as it was you as paid to have the Captain mur——, I mean bashed; but them three young fellows as done it—you ought to think o' them. One of 'em's conscience is pricking him already; and he says he'll go and make a clean breast of it to the police, and say as it was your gold as tempted him"——

"What! If he does that, I'm lost!" yelled Tinkletop.

"So I said," replied the Professor. "And I argeyed it out with him, and I got 'em all to agree to get out of the country and lie quiet till they see if the body's found, or the Captain's friends inquire about it. It might blow over, you know, in time"——

"Yes, yes, quite right; and will they go?"

"Well, you see, Guv'nor: they're poor fellows; they aint got the coin to spare, and they've got mothers dependin' on 'em."

"I'll pay all expenses."

"I told 'em you would; so they said a hunderd 'ud do it, and they're waitin' in a place of safety. Give me the hunderd and I'll go and ship 'em off to Spain at once."

"Here you are—here's the hundred-pound note. Go, go at once!"

The Professor took the hundred pounds, groaned inwardly, and left the room. Then Tinkletop buried his face in his hands and shed scalding tears. He would have given all his vast wealth and gone back to be a stable-boy again if he could only have undone that dark night's work.

* * * * * *

For a week Jeremiah Tinkletop was like a man in a dream. He couldn't eat or sleep, for murder was on his soul and terror in his heart. He trembled at every sound. When he met the hangman in a public thoroughfare he always blushed and looked the other way. A

fortnight after the first interview the Professor turned up again. "One of the young fellows had got home-sick, and was coming back. He couldn't stand Spain. If he could go to Australia ——." It was the one that wanted to make a clean breast of it.

"Yes, yes; let him go to Australia; let 'em all go," murmured Tinkletop: "the farther away they go, the better I shall like it."

It was two hundred pounds that the Professor took away to send to Spain that day. It would just pay the fares of the three accomplices to Australia, and leave them a little to live on when they got there.

Six weeks afterwards the Professor came again. This time he only had another hundred for the poor young fellows, but in about six months Mr. Tinkletop's crime had cost him £1000.

It might have cost him more; but one afternoon while walking down Regent-street he came suddenly upon Miss Lola D'Arcy, and she was leaning on the arm of *the murdered man!* At first Tinkletop thought it was a ghost, and his knees trembled under him.

He was to be haunted!!!

But presently, as he was wiping the heavy drops of perspiration from his brow, he saw the murdered man and Miss D'Arcy go into a jeweller's shop.

They asked to see some wedding rings. The young lady tried one on, and the murdered man put down a hundred pound note to pay for it.

Tinkletop was looking through the window and saw the number of the note.

It was the number of the note he had only that morning given to the Professor for those poor young fellows in Australia. With a wild cry of rage Tinkletop turned away, and hailing a passing omnibus, went home, and tore up the confession of murder which he had left in a secret drawer of his writing-desk, to be opened with his will.

* * * * * *

Professor Walloper only grinned when he met the infuriated Tinkletop that evening. He said it was a rattling good "barney"—whatever that may mean—and everybody who was in the know, and a good many were, laughed too and said it was the finest practical joke they 'd heard for years.

It had all been got up for Tinkletop by his "friends," and the Captain had never even been followed. The money obtained of the amorous bookmaker had been equally divided among the merry conspirators, and on their share of the "joke" Miss D'Arcy and the Captain had arranged to get married.

In honour of their benefactor their first little boy had "Tinkletop" given to it as a Christian name.

In the course of time Mr. Tinkletop sufficiently recovered his equanimity to tell the story himself, and now he laughs as loudly as anyone at the terror he experienced in consequence of his share in the "crime."

But he is more careful than he was about the company he keeps, and there is a whisper in the neighbourhood in which he lives that next year he will stand for churchwarden, and devote his leisure to parochial affairs, and spend his evenings at the local club, where everybody is eminently respectable and the whisky unimpeachable.

THE ROMANCE OF A FLAT.

BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.

—:o:—

I.

"Say that again, and I'll knock your confounded head off!"

"You 're a beggarly fortune-hunter, and you only want the girl's money. There!"

Spang!

That was the sound made by a blow, but Dick Ripley did not catch it; for I was the unlucky butt who received that shot—an outer—in the lower part of the chest, and it had such an effect upon my breathing that for five minutes I could hardly speak. When I could, I made a vow never to interfere again when two fellows were quarrelling about the same girl.

My interference, however, proved beneficial; for I looked so queer that they had to bathe my face, and give me brandy—some of my own—and, instead of knocking each other about with fists, they did it with words, till Dick Ripley went off, and Frank Jerdan stood looking out of window at the great pile into which Dick had gone.

"I 'm deuced sorry, Phil," he cried. "I am, indeed. I wouldn't have hit you like that for the world."

"Never mind, old man!" I said. "I don't mind; but isn't it a pity for you two to get quarrelling like that? Such friends as we all were!"

"Yes; it's a pity, Phil. But put yourself in my place. I love little Rue to distraction, and I 'm forbidden to call, just because that prig thinks he cares for her, and has set the old man against me."

"Has he?"

"Yes: told him that I 'm after Rue for the sake of her money."

"Well, money and a pretty girl are nice," I said.

"Hang her money! I 'd marry her without a penny."

"Going?"

"Yes; I want to get somewhere alone to think. I 'm so put out I 'm not fit company for anyone."

II.

Poor Frank Jerdan, who was horribly low-spirited over his love affair, shook hands, and went away, and I had just settled myself down to my writing when Dick Ripley came back.

"I saw him go," he said; "and I 've come to apologise. Phil, that fellow 's growing a brute, and I 'm sorry you were hurt."

"Oh, never mind that. But look here: you can't both have the girl."

"No," he said hotly. "Only one of us, and that one is I."

"Oh!"

"I have the father's consent; Mrs. Lipscombe favours me, and the old man says if ever Jerdan sets foot on his premises again, he 'll shoot him."

"And the young lady?"

"Well, she 'll favour me as soon as that scoundrel is out of the way. But you know what women are."

"Yes: a little," I said; and soon after, to my great relief, Dick Ripley went, and I saw pretty little Rue Lipscombe come out on the first-floor flat balcony to attend to her flowers, and glance from time to time at the balcony about thirty feet away on the same level where Frank Jerdan resided with his mother—Dick Ripley's rooms being two floors higher in the same building—a huge structure divided into residential chambers as the agent called them, but which we irreverently called flats.

MR. GEORGE MANVILLE FENN,
POPULAR NOVELIST AND DRAMATIST.
From a Photograph by Elliott and Fry, 55, Baker-street, W.

"No, my dear," I said to myself as I watched the dainty little maiden, "he is not there. Gone for a walk in the park. Better marry the fox, my dear—I 'm the fox!—while the lion and tiger are fighting for you. I shall not scratch, and they may."

III.

"Never enlisted, did you, Phil?"

"What bosh!—no. Why?"

"Thought you might tell me what it 's like."

"Why?"

"Think I shall."

"Why? once more."

"Life 's a dead blank. I 'm forbidden the Lipscombe's place; Dick Ripley has it all his own way, and is making the running."

"Be the dark horse and win."

"Haven't a chance; and the little girl is so wretched. She gave me such a look when we met. What would you do if you were me?"

"Wait."

"Can't. Good-night."

"Going?"

"Yes."

He was gone.

That night I was sitting writing when the bell rang, and Dick Ripley was shown up.

"Hullo!" I said. "Come for a cigar?"

"Yes," he replied; "I was rather dull, and I thought I 'd come over here."

I got out the cigar-box and spirit-stand, poked up the fire, and drew the curtains.

"Precious cold," I said.

"Yes; snow 's half a foot deep," rejoined Dick, drawing the curtain aside and looking out.

"Well, grand Christmas weather. Better than wet and slush. Hallo! what 's the matter?"

"Hush!" he said, with a mysterious look. "There! I can't help it, Phil; I must take you into my confidence. You know all about over the way?"

"What? about Miss Lipscombe?"

"Yes. I want you to let me sit here and watch the place."

"Well, that 's cool," I said. "Hang it all, no!"

"But, Phil! don't be hard on a man. I must watch that window opposite. Don't go against me."

"What does it mean? Jealousy?"

"Don't ask me, man. I can't tell you; and pray don't waste time. Even now he may be there."

"Well, it 's no business of mine," I said sharply.

"No, but it is of mine, Phil. There, you will?"

"Will I?"

PRESENTED WITH THE CHRISTMAS NUMBER OF THE "PENNY ILLUSTRATED PAPER," 1888.

DE LA RUE & CO., LONDON.

"COME UNDER THE MISTLETOE."

PRESENTED WITH THE CHRISTMAS NUMBER OF THE "PENNY ILLUSTRATED PAPER," 1888.

DE LA RUE & CO., LONDON.

"COME UNDER THE MISTLETOE."

"Yes, of course"; and before I knew what he was going to do, he had drawn the big screen round the fire, turned out the lamp, and taken his place at the window.

"Well, this is cool," I said to myself, as I lit a cigar; and as he took no further notice of me, I stood behind him, and gazed out at the beautiful snowy night.

His eyes were fixed on Lipscombe's window, where there was a large balcony, similar to half-a-dozen more extending along the second floor of the great building; the next one being at Frank Jerdan's chambers, thirty feet away from the Lipscombes', and I could have told Dick Ripley of several little bits of courting I had watched when two people we knew were in the balconies.

The snow had ceased and the white road and pavement made all very light outside, so bright that we could see the windows perfectly clearly, and that there were no lights in the rooms.

"Look here," I said, after about half-an-hour had passed; "this is great nonsense, Dick. Go home and don't be a fool."

"Hush!" he whispered excitedly, as he drew back from the window; and I felt startled, for, all at once, something fell from high up in the face of the huge building, and I saw it was a rope hanging down from an open window, and an arm was visible swinging it about.

"See that?" he whispered.

"Yes," I said; "someone fishing for a policeman. He'll get a bite directly. No."

"It's that scoundrel Frank Jerdan. He's coming down the rope to keep an appointment with Miss Lipscombe."

"Nonsense! the rope has swung into his own balcony, and he would not be so mad."

"Wait and see," whispered Dick; and I waited, watching the open window fifty feet above the balconies; but no one came.

"He wouldn't be such an"——

"Hist. Look!"

We had been waiting five minutes and no one came down, but all at once the window of Frank Jerdan's chambers was opened cautiously, a dark figure came out on the snowy balcony, closed the window, and I heard a panting noise from Dick, as, without a moment's hesitation, the dark figure seized the rope, mounted the balcony railings, and the next instant launched itself off, and was swinging to and fro between the two balconies, gaining impulse more and more—the human pendulum before us at the end of fifty feet of rope described a larger and larger arc, till it touched the balcony from which it had started and then the one in front of Lipscombes' window, caught the railings, climbed in, and, as we watched breathlessly, we could distinctly see that the rope was tied to the railings, so as to afford a means of escape, and then the window was tapped at, opened, and the figure disappeared.

"The jade! The scoundrel!" panted Dick, as he crossed the room.

"What are you going to do?" I cried, trying to stop him.

"Have revenge!" he said, and he shook himself free and rushed out of the house.

IV.

I was about to follow him, but I felt that it was no business of mine.

"I sha'n't interfere," I said. "Wish I could warn poor old Frank, but there isn't time. Dick's a coward, though; and perhaps, after a row, the old people will see that it's of no use to try and stem the tide.

So I went back to the window to finish my cigar, and watch the denouement of poor old Frank escaping by the window and swinging himself back, after Dick had given the alarm, as I felt sure he would.

"Hope he will not break his neck in his hurry!" I said; and then I stood there paralysed, for, to my horror, I could see a figure which I, guessed to be Dick's, coming down the rope from the open window high up, and he slid down so quickly that almost before I could breathe freely he was in the Lipscombes' balcony.

"What's he going to do?" I said.

The answer came to my eyes, for I could see him by the reflection of the lamplight in the snow untie the rope, seize it high up, throw himself off, and, reversing the process I had before seen, swing to and fro till he could reach Frank Jerdan's balcony, into which he mounted, and there tied the end of the rope and went in.

"Why, it must be Frank escaping," I said; "and I thought it was Dick."

"By George! no. He has done that to cut off the poor beggar's retreat before he warns the old man. What a sneak!"

I stood looking out as a wheeled affair passed the door, and a policeman walked slowly along the opposite side of the way.

"A minute later, and you'd have seen him swinging across," I said. "Perhaps! Now what shall I do?"

I was too excited to stay in; so I hurried out, and five minutes later I had, by means of a silver key, let myself into the residential mansions, and gone up-stairs boldly to Mr. Lipscombe's floor, making the excuse to myself that, as an old friend of Dick Ripley, I ought to follow him to prevent bloodshed—nasal bloodshed, of course!

As I had surmised, Dick had roused up old Lipscombe; his front door, giving on the grand staircase, was ajar; I pushed it, and went into the passage, which was faintly lit by rays from a room on the left; and, without hesitation, I went in, to find old Lipscombe in his dressing-gown, with a chamber candlestick in one hand, glaring at Dick the while

"Very well, Sir," Dick was saying, "I have told you the simple truth. I saw what I have told you, and if you go softly into your drawing-room you'll find him there."

"Your friend's mad, Mr. Roby!" said the old man—"or drunk. Are you going to endorse what he says?"

"Indeed, Sir, I am not," I cried hastily. "I've come to fetch him away."

"That's right," said old Lipscombe; "but first of all, as he dreamed he saw what he says from your rooms, you shall both see for yourselves that there is no truth in the charge, and after this, Mr. Ripley, be good enough to cease your visits to my place."

"He'll have to face the old man or break his cursed neck," whispered Dick to me, with a malignant hiss; and then he clenched his fists as the old man threw open the drawing-room door, and held the light above his head.

The room was empty, and Dick Ripley's eyes seemed to be starting out of his head.

"I swear"—— he began.

"Take him home, Mr. Roby!" said the old man, scornfully.

"They're out on the balcony," cried Dick. "I swear it!" and before he could be stopped, he ran across and tore open the window; but there was no one outside.

Dick staggered back and out of the room with me, so overcome that he could not speak till I had him outside, when he whispered hoarsely—

"Look in the area. Are they down there—and dead?"

"No one in the area," I said cheerfully, after a glance, as the snow fell faster than ever; and five minutes after I had him in his own rooms and said "Good night."

"I'd give a five-pound note to find out how he got away," muttered Dick.

I could have told him, for I wanted my fiver back, but I did not, and Frank paid me the money I had spent, after swearing secrecy—an oath I've kept.

For miracles do happen sometimes. This one was the passing of the fire-escape, which was reared up, and in two minutes Frank knew the worst from the fireman, and had helped pretty little Rue into the stocking, down which he slipped in turn.

* * * * *

"Nearly frightened my mother to death, Phil, old chap," Frank afterwards said; "but I got her to take the darling in, and she kept Rue there till we were married, and the old boy soon came round. Wicked, of course; but I always was a sinner. You'd have done the same. Eh? what say?"

"I said it was the Romance of a Flat."

"COME UNDER THE MISTLETOE."

(SEE COLOURED SUPPLEMENT.)

Two sly little pussies are herein portrayed,
A quadruped one and a biped—
The former, a cat small and stripèd—
The latter a pretty and petted young maid.
The former bends over the latter's white bed—
As who should say "Come, it is playtime;
There's a chance for a gleeful and gay time!"
And the human puss holds a small branch o'er her head,
And says to her feline friend near—
"Ah, sweet little Kitty!
My pussy so pretty—
Come under the mistletoe, dear!"

The maiden, alas! hath been poorly of late,
But her soft little cheek now discloses
Its former tint—born of red roses.
And the kitten has come just to greet its old mate.
The auburn-tressed puss, now grown stronger again,
For a small bout of romping is eager
(For her pleasures of late have been meagre).
But her summons to quadruped Puss is in vain,
The kitten pretends not to hear
Her mate's invitation
(Expressed with elation),
"Come under the mistletoe, dear!"

Time's whirligig brings his revenges, we know,
As this merry young minx will discover,
When she, in due time, has a lover,
As she *will* have, of course, when she bigger doth grow,
Then he'll tantalise *her* in a similar way.
For then when Pa Christmas is present
Intent upon making things pleasant
To this auburn-tressed damsel that lover will say
(Or whisper, mayhap, in her ear,
With loverlike slyness),
"A truce to this shyness,
Come under the mistletoe, dear!"

H. CHANCE NEWTON.

"THE LASS THAT LOVES A SAILOR"

SAMBO'S CHRISTMAS BOX: "ME AM PROUD MAN NOW, MISSA ETHEL!"

MY NUMERAL NIGHTMARE.

A TALE OF STRANGE COINCIDENCES.

BY O. P. Q. PHILANDER SMIFF.

—:o:—

If you were to ask me whether I am a superstitious man, I should make what is called a guarded answer.

That is to say, I should reply, "Well, it 's just like this: up to last Tuesday fortnight I was the most matter-of-fact and sceptical of men."

MR. AGLEN DOWTY
("O. P. Q. PHILANDER SMIFF").
From the Photograph by Valentine Blanchard, 980, Regent-street.

I admit that I had a prejudice against walking under ladders; but then it so happened that the last time I did walk under one I got a large "blob" of white paint in my eye, so *that* prejudice is easily accounted for.

But I thought no more of starting on a journey on a Friday than I did of spilling the salt at table; and I would, any day, have rather sat down thirteen at dinner than have missed a good meal.

This, I repeat, was the state of my mind up to last Tuesday fortnight at 7·35 a.m. Since then, however, I—— But stay, I will first relate my plain unvarnished tale, and then you will be better able to judge what is my present mental condition.

Be it known to you, then, that on the morning of last Tuesday fortnight I awoke, from what had been a dream-disturbed night's rest, with a start. I tell you this advisedly, because you will admit, I am sure, that one can't do better when commencing a story than make a start to begin with.

Very well, then; I awoke, I say, with a start, and jumping immediately out of bed—a proceeding, I may say, in direct opposition to my usual conduct when I awake in the morning—hurriedly procured a pencil from my waistcoat pocket, and instantly noted down three figures on an old envelope which chanced to be lying on the dressing-table.

This done, I returned to my couch and set myself to think. "Yes," I said to myself, "those were the figures I dreamt of; there 's no mistake about it. Good Heavens!" I went on (I was only thinking to myself, you know), "they seem to have burned themselves into my very brain!" and, in sooth, were I to detail my night's dreams to you, you would not wonder at this. I had, in fact, been the victim of a hideous nightmare, with which the three figures I have mentioned were intimately associated. It began, if I remember aright, with my being dropped bodily from the car of a monster balloon, on whose side, in blood-red characters, were the figures—

159.

And just as I was about to be bodily impaled on the spiked railings that yawned beneath—stay, though; I doubt if spiked railings *can* yawn even in a nightmare—methought in my dream that the balloon suddenly changed into a kind of flying tombstone, on which in fiery lines I read my own epitaph, finishing up with the strange words—

HE PASSED AWAY IN CROSSING THE LINE,
AGED

159.

After that the flying tombstone, with a damp monumental kind of a gurgle I shall never forget, threw itself upon my chest, and all seemed a blank till I recovered consciousness, bound hand and foot, on the floor of a boot and shoe making establishment evidently kept by raving lunatics; for as soon as I looked up, a grinning maniac leapt on my prostrate form and began measuring my instep with a live viper for a tape.

Odd as it may seem, I distinctly recollect at that awful moment, when I expected to feel the fatal fangs of that deadly reptile fasten on my foot, lifting my head slightly and saying *sotto voce* to the maniac, "You won't forget, please, to allow for the bunion!"

Before he could answer me, however, a gruff voice shouted out, "What number boot does he take?" and I again seemed to lose consciousness as a hidden chorus of fiends chortled out—

"159!"

And so this horrible assorted nightmare went on, the number I have named inevitably running through all its varied scenes, till at last I dreamt that, after having vainly been compelled to try to eat 159 Bath buns in an hour, I was sentenced to 159 lashes with a red-hot whip; and it was at the first blow of that terrible thong that I awoke with the start I have mentioned.

I have thus gone into the details of my dream to make you better understand the way in which those three figures,

159,

were impressed on my brain. Nay, I am not ashamed to say that I went down to breakfast feeling anything but calm and self-possessed. To use my sympathetic wife's words indeed, I was "all of a tremble"; and it was not until I had finished my kidneys on toast, and was well on with a boiled egg, that I began to feel quite myself again. But as I took a second egg, and began to tap its shell with a knife, I felt so much better that I turned with a smile to "Georgie Porgie," my favourite son, and promised him the portion of the egg I was about to slice off.

I say "that I was *about* to slice off," for the intended operation was never completed by me. Nor will you wonder that this was so when I add that, chancing to glance down at my egg to make sure of the decapitating blow I was about to give, I saw on the side, only too plainly, the fatal figures of my dream—

15/9.

They were only written in lead pencil, and in the way shown above, but to my agitated gaze they seemed like figures of fire.

"Why, Philander!" cried my wife, patting my back vigorously as she spoke, under the mistaken notion that it was a crumb that had gone the wrong way, "whatever is the matter?"

"Matter!" I cried, "Goodness only knows! See here, Anna Maria," I went on, seizing her hand and pointing to the egg, "what figures are those? Quick, quick! I say, what figures are those?"

"Why, good gracious me, Philander!" replied the good woman, "it 's only the figures your Aunt Caroline puts on all her eggs. It 's to show when they 're laid, you know. On this one you see it is the 15th of the 9th; that is, the 15th of September."

It was a plausible explanation, I had to admit, so far as it went: but it did not explain why an egg laid on that date above all others had fallen to my lot that morning.

For a moment in my newly aroused perturbation, I was tempted to tell Anna Maria everything; but the children were all there, bless their happy little hearts! and I refrained.

But I could not eat that fateful egg—much to Georgie Porgie's delight, I may add, for it was handed on to him.

"Come, come!" I said to myself, "you must pull yourself together, Philander, old man, and forget what, after all, was only a silly dream, probably due to the fact that you supped, not wisely, but too well, after seeing 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.'"

So I did pull myself together, and was in the hall brushing my hat ere starting for Fleet-street, when Mrs. Smiff called down to me over the first floor balusters.

"Oh, Philander, dear," said she, "if you 're anywhere near Drury-lane to-day I wish you 'd call in for our carving-knife at the cutler's. It 's the one you took to be ground and set, you know."

"Very well, ducky," was my cheery response; "but, by-the-way, what 's the grinder's name?"

"Smithson or Smitherson, or something like that," returned the partner of my bosom. "But I know the number, at any rate; it 's—

159!"

So saying, Mrs. Smiff re-entered her bed-room, and slammed the door so loudly that she did not hear the racket I made as I fell back into the umbrella-stand.

Yes, I was clearly unnerved, when even the mention of a cutler's number in Drury-lane could thus literally upset my equilibrium.

"Bah!" I said to myself—and I really seemed to have done little but talk to myself ever since I had risen that morning—"a mere coincidence, of course. But I wish the fellow had lived at 160 or 158 though, all the same."

I had said this to myself whilst reclining, anything but comfortably, amongst umbrellas and cricket-bats and fishing-rods—there must have been a hook on one, methinks—and pot hats and clothes-brushes and the like; but feeling that for the sake of an example to the children I ought not to be found in so suspicious a position so early, I scrambled to my feet, and, seizing my hat and stick, hastily left the house.

Once in the fresh air I felt renewed courage; and by the time I reached the main road I was positively whistling. The fact was, I had been talking to myself again as I went along—I do *so* appreciate my own conversation, let me state parenthetically. "Philander, old fellow," I had said, going out of my way as I spoke to meet a cross-eyed man, just to show that I didn't believe in the ill-luck traditionally associated with the confronting of adult males possessed of a squint, "these coincidences don't mean anything really. Or, even if they do, it may be only to bring you luck that you are thus having your attention drawn to this number."

And then I bethought me of the people who dream of a number before the Derby, and then back a horse on the strength of it, and make untold pots of gold.

Also did I bethink me of those mysterious old friars in Naples and Palermo who dream of certain numbers that come out trumps in the next Lottery drawing.

"Good!" murmured I in conclusion, "I will go and see one of my

'sporting prophet' friends about it as soon as ever I get to Fleet-street."

I had intended to jump on a passing Charing-cross 'bus, but I suddenly remembered that 'buses have numbers on them like cabs, and feeling convinced, in spite of my recovered equanimity, that the shock of seeing my mysterious number again just then would unnerve me, I altered my mind, and made for the nearest railway station instead.

Waiting on the platform, who should I meet but the well-known "Bucephalus" of the *Sporting Spinner*. "You 're the very fellow I wanted to see," I exclaimed, and when I had told him enough of my story to arouse his interest, I begged him to tell me if he knew of any way in which my fateful figures,

159,

could be mixed up with any particular race-horse.

"Bucephalus" *alias* "The Tip-topping Tipster," thought some time, but in vain. "No, Smiffy," he replied at length (he always calls me "Smiffy," because he is of such a generally sportive disposition). "there 's no gee-gee that I know of to which your number points. Still, it 's very odd, isn't it?"

"Well, I don't see that 159 is odder than any other number which isn't even," I answered, just to show that I could be generally sportive too.

"Oh, you *funny*, FUNNY dog!" cried my friend, prodding me with wholly unnecessary vehemence with his stick. "All the same, Smiffy," he went on, "I'll be on what we sportsmen call the '*kee weeve*,' and if I wire any horse's name to you, put the pot on him like mad, d' you hear?"

And with that we parted, he to resume his mashing of the barmaid at the station buffet, and I to take my seat in the Ludgate-hill train.

I had bought the *Daily News*, and was about to turn for once to the Sporting Intelligence first, when the entrance of another passenger caused me to look up, and my eyes lighted, quite by chance, on the mirror-panel of glass immediately under the hat-rack. At the same moment a porter closed the door, and simultaneously three odd figures were made visible to me. At first all I noticed was that they were not 159, nor indeed any recognisable combination of Arabic numerals, and I was congratulating myself that the spell was broken, when it dawned on me that these, at first sight, unfamiliar characters, were not, as I had tried to hope, the advertisement of some enterprising Russian manufacturer, but were nothing more nor less than the reflection of the number that had haunted me so long—the number of my nightmare—the fateful number

159.

A glance at the door of the carriage confirmed my suspicion only too readily. There on a small oval plate of white enamel, in figures of black, which might have been of fire, so did they seem to sear my sight, I read—

159.

Number of a *horse* forsooth! Vain thought! For here I had come on it only too clearly figuring as the number of a *carriage!*

I have reason to believe a porter had to shake me at Ludgate-hill; and I staggered at first so palpably on the platform, that a passing young idiot thought it funny to say, "What! you wicked old man! and so early in the morning too! I 'll tell your missus what you 've done!"

You will judge of my disorganised state when I tell you that that young idiot went on his way quite uninjured.

As for me, I hardly liked to look about me as I walked to the office of *The Weekly Wag-in-its-Way*, a paper which I was editing at the time in the absence of the proper editor—which suggests that I am an *im*proper editor; though that, of course, is not my meaning.

Barely had I thrown myself into the editorial arm-chair when, as Mr. Louis Stevenson would say, "a strange thing happened!"

The door suddenly opened, and the proprietor of *The Weekly Wag-in-its-Way* entered with an open letter in his hand, looking anything but comfortable.

"Ah, good morning, Mr. Smiff," said he. "Perhaps you know who wrote that sparkling attack on the 'The Fish Ring' in our paper?"

Now the article was mine, and I modestly admitted as much.

"Oh, it 's yours, is it?" returned the proprietor. "Then you 'll be pleased to hear that all the big salesmen at Billingsgate have commenced libel actions!"

"Indeed," said I. "But, surely," I went on, "that article appeared weeks ago?"

"It appeared," answered the boss severely, "in Number

159!"

I felt myself falling into a limp and inert mass. These repeated coincidences were really more than I could stand up against; and as soon as possible I hurried through the necessary work, and resolved to go home and sit somewhere with my head in a bag.

But there was the getting home, and this proved a really terrible ordeal. The very air seemed full of 159's.

So surely as I looked at a passing 'bus, I saw, or thought I saw, the fateful figures on the conductor's badge. And when I hailed a cab, the first thing I saw as I took my seat were those nightmare numerals again. True the 159 were followed by other figures, but these I did not stay to read, but, shutting my eyes, resolved to keep them closed till I reached my domicile. But it was not to be. Ere long a sudden shock all but threw me into the street, and opening my eyes I saw that my cab had run into a fish-cart outside a shop in the Blackfriars Bridge-road. But this was not all. The number of that shop was No.

159!

After this I only laughed hysterically when, fitfully opening my eyes, I caught sight of—

THIS KNICKERBOCKER SUIT

15/9

in a ready-made tailor's; but when, in obedience to some occult impulse, I counted the money in my pocket, and found it amounted to thirteen and threepence, which is, of course,

159

pence, I literally grovelled in the straw at the bottom of my cab.

How glad I was to reach home I need scarcely say, though even here I was seemingly not safe, for as I entered my house my eldest son ran up, and cried, "Oh, papa! I 've got top marks this week for Latin: I 've made

159!"

Poor dear boy! How little he knew what he was doing.

It was then that I resolved to go to bed for the rest of the day, and thus break the numeral spell, if possible, which held me. So I went, saying I was unwell, and directing my wife not to call me on any account.

* * * * *

"Who 's there?" I asked some hours later in answer to a loud knock.

"It 's me! Anna Maria. I 'm sorry to disturb you, but someone wants you particularly, dear!"

"Then I can't see him. Who is it?"

"Do try, dearie. The gentleman says it is very particular business."

"Who is the gentleman?" I repeated.

"Well, dear, if you must know, it is a policeman!"

Good Heavens! I saw it all. It was my fate. At any rate, I would soon settle any doubt as to this.

"Anna Maria," I said eagerly. "Please go down with my compliments, and ask the policeman to kindly send me up his number."

"Well," I asked excitedly, some moments later; "have you got it?"

"Yes, dear," returned my wife, "he says he is

No. 159 S."

Although I was quite prepared for my wife's answer, her confirmation of my fears served to complete my mental prostration.

No. 159 S—the S clearly suggesting my name, Smiff—was my fate, and resistance was useless. So I sent to say I would be with the officer shortly.

* * * * *

I found No. 159 S polite but peremptory in requesting my presence at the police-station, and I was so upset by the events of the day that I had not the courage even to ask why I was wanted. And accordingly, as evening fell, I might have been seen—I *was* seen, as a fact, by all my neighbours—being escorted to my doom by that fateful number

159

which had haunted me night and day.

* * * * *

And now comes the strangest part of my strange history. It turned out at the police-station, after a short conversation, that my virtual arrest had been "all a mistake." The man really wanted was a Mr. P. Sniff, who also lived in the road in which I reside.

"If it is not a rude question, Mr. Inspector," said I to the sergeant on duty (it always pleases officials to give them brevet rank in addressing them), "may I ask what is the number of this Mr. P. Sniff's house?"

"Certainly, Sir," was the reply; and turning over some papers he added, "Ah, here it is! His number is

159!"

The police were kind enough to put me into a cab when I had sufficiently recovered from this last shock, and when I reached home I was about to stagger supperless to bed, when my wife said, "There is a telegram for you, Philander."

It was from "Bucephalus," and ran thus: "Your tip has come off, and we shall clear on day about

£159."

Let me be candid enough to add, though, that this telegram was only a little joke on the part of my generally sportive friend.

Not only did I never get a penny of that £159, but I have never dreamt of, or met with that number since.

* * * * *

Now you understand why I gave a guarded answer to the question whether I am a superstitious man and a believer in coincidences?

In sooth, I hardly know what to say even now, but I can tell you this plainly and positively:—

I would not live in a house rent free, nor drive in a cab for nothing, nor take railway journeys with a free pass in a carriage—if the number of either of the three chanced to be the number of my numeral nightmare, which, as it will be scarcely necessary for me to repeat, was

159.

MARY'S CHRISTMAS BOX: JACK'S PROPOSAL

WHY HIS MAJESTY'S MAIL WAS LATE: SEE "THE REASON WHY."

THE REASON WHY.

(See Illustration: "Why His Majesty's Mail was Late.")

MR. BYRON WEBBER,
AUTHOR OF "IN LUCK'S WAY," "PIGSKIN AND WILLOW," ETC.
From a Photograph by B. Collenette, Guernsey.

WINE-GOLDEN with age is the oft-told tale
Of valiant John and his Majesty's Mail,
How with traces unbroken, and never a spill,
He was caught by the snow upon Wilderness Hill;
And chins will waggle, and chuckles wax sly,
As the gossips remember the reason why.

Taciturn John was his Grace's groom—
The Duke's, you know, who went over to Rome,
And sold his hunters and kennel and stud
(All of the grand old Ducal blood);
And, changing his servants, gave John a fresh start,
As driver and guard of the Government cart.

Now John, never counted a marrying man,
Had cast sheep's eyes upon beautiful Anne
(Anne was her Grace's favourite maid),
But, tell her? God bless you!—the man was afraid.
And when Widow Wilson sent for her niece,
John's fate went with her, and that wasn't peace!

For the Royal Mail was horsed at the Swan,
Which the Widow dragooned, and worshipful John
Was doomed day in and doomed day out,
To study sweet Anne in rapture or doubt
As she bothered her wooers, a dozen or more,
But, never, the witch! showing wooer the door.

Yet, hoarding his love, and hoarding his gold
(At interest both), he broodingly told
His growing riches with growing hope;
And, as for the wooers, why, let them have rope!
Till a different lover came home from the sea,
And John said sadly, "Anne 's not for me!"

A voyage, then—a wedding! *He* never came back.
The morning they gave her the letter in black
Was like—poor girl!—to have been her last;
But she lived, and her hours of suffering passed:
Leaving her broken and weary and wan,
And dearer than ever to dutiful John!

A sweet brow furrowed, a pale drawn cheek,
Grave eyes, and a manner subdued, bespeak
A change, wherein, faith conquering fear,
He sees a far chance that he may bring near:
What wouldn't he do, what couldn't he say
If love but enlightened and pointed the way!

Love did. She spoke of her sailor, drowned,
And wept as she visioned the grave he found.
And John wept too, as became a man;
Then, from that minute awakening, Anne
Looked down and listened, and saw and heard
That which her heart-strings strangely stirred.

A weary wooing to some: but they
(Or one of them) had such volumes to say
In the silent language that means so much,
Time sped, and they scarcely felt its touch.
One New Year's Eve disclosure came,
In—spark to powder—live letters of flame!

Lord Basil, Duke Hildebrand's racketty son,
Was ending the year as the year he begun.
With servile laughter the glasses rung,
As the scurril ribaldry rolled from his tongue;
Till John silenced his Lordship, and knocked him down,
For lightlying Anne with a jest of the Town!

Out together, with little ado,
Lord and lackey to see it through!
My Lord was clever and cruel and tough,
But it came to pass he got more than enough.
And John? Why his silent service was done:
He had fought for his proud, pale darling, and—won!

She crowned the victor, and heavened his bliss
When she gave him her tremulous mouth to kiss.
And Aunt (it was marvellous!), nothing loth,
Gave the Swan's libation to gladden them both—
A bottle to keep off the deadening chill,
As he faced the keen fleeces on Wilderness Hill!

My word! How John in the mail-cart flew!
As the wild wind, feathered and pointed, blew!
And his great heart galloped at such a pace,
Wind, heart, and horses seemed running a race!
Then he cried, as he collared the bleak hill brow,
"I'll drink, 'God bless her!' and drink it now!"

Thereat he drew his two horses aside.
Gave each a nosebag, and drank to "The Bride!"
Then tranquilly toasted, the snow stealing down,
The Widow, the Swan—quite forgetting the Crown.
The Old Year! The New! How joyous was life!
A fig for the Mail—Anne would soon be his wife!

BYRON WEBBER.

MERRY CHRISTMAS—A FRAGMENT.

BY RICHARD HENRY.

IT was Christmas—merry Christmas-time—and various things were taking place which never by any chance happen at any other period. But it was Christmas—merry Christmas!—all the same, and the Mystic Influence having made itself felt rather more influentially than usual, all sorts and conditions of men—from the peer in his palace to the peasant (on tramp) in his casual ward—were playing the same old game of make-believe, and, on the whole, playing it well.

Nowhere, perhaps, was the game being better played than around the camp-fire which blazed merrily in the front kitchen of the Posada del Paddingkenyos, a notorious house-of-call for the dangerous classes in the far fastnesses of Los Siete Diales. Around the cheerful but not particularly clean hearth caroused several sportsmen, whose flashing eyes, flasher jewellery, and flashest conversation stamped them at once as men of mystery, whose room, no matter how poorly furnished, would always be preferable to their company. True professors in the Art of Getting a Bit, and in nowise particular as to the means, they had travelled much, and had seen men, cities, and racecourses. The outsides of palaces and the insides of prisons were alike familiar to them. In their wanderings up and down the earth they had, in a general way, done pretty nearly everything—except work for their living. The line *must* be drawn somewhere, and they drew it at that. But though for them the confidence dodge had from earliest infancy no illusions, they were never known to ask for trust—not (*bien entendu*) for fear of the refusal which often offends, but from a higher, nobler instinct. What they wanted they took—when they could get it. When they couldn't they went without, and the surrounding atmosphere became, for the time being, blue with blasphemy. Of course, the reader has already guessed who these men were. It might have been seen at a glance, or even with half a bull's-eye, that they were the Ruthless Rampers of the Sierras and elsewhere, for whose exploits see police reports passim.

It was, indeed, a lurid scene, and probably more worthy the pencil of Sub Rosa than that of his namesake, Salvator. Evil-smelling "dips," with ginger-beer bottles for sconces, shed a dim but irreligious light upon the far corners where the fire's gleam failed to penetrate; and as the candles guttered in the night wind, they ever and anon shed their tallowy tribute on the revellers' faces, hair, and clothes. Chains of coloured paper descended in fanciful festoons from the smoke-begrimed rafters; while sprigs of mistletoe and holly, stuck in various crevices of the walls, indicated that every one of these desperate men had probably, at least once, had a mother, and that, either because or in spite of the fact that Christmas comes but once a year, they had now made up their minds to thoroughly enjoy it. Hanover jacks, notes of the Bank of Elegance, c'reet cards, coshes, false whiskers, and other weapons of the chase picturesquely littered the newly-sawdusted adobé floor; and such of the band as were sufficiently sober to sit up improved the shining hour by "going over" the bodies of their prostrate companions for secreted swag, which, when found, was confiscated to the finders' purposes.

It is well known that there are degrees in everything. This rule obtains

equally in thermometers and in thieves' kitchens. There were many grades in the company now assembled in the Posada del Paddingkenyos, and, earlier in the evening, they had signified the same by the diversity of their drinks. While the élite of the band drank pints of Pommery, out of pewter pots, with the air of dissipated dukes or dandified racing reporters, the meaner sort had moistened their clay with mezcal, aguardiente, and quatre-demi (or four-half)—a beverage which has always been held in high esteem for its filling qualities at the price. But the time for class distinctions was now at an end; and the Spirit of Christmas—in glasses, warm, and with sugar—circulated rapidly from hand to hand, and, as it did so, the noisy became noisier, the braggarts more boastful, and the fierce more ferocious.

Of all nationalities and various sizes, three of the band stood out, or rather sat down, more prominently than their fellows. Noteworthy in this trio was Miguel el Magsmano, an Italian from the wildest part of Connemara, whose ancestors (so it was said) had been kings in their own country. He was reputed to be a devil of a fellow among the women and had never been known to spare the bottle when somebody else had paid for it. It could not have been his beaux yeux that made Miguel so popular with the fair, for he had but one eye, and with that he squinted as though looking nine ways for Sunday. Miguel was armed to the teeth, which he from time to time carelessly picked with his navajo. He wore a chloroform-pad next his heart, and was thus provided with at once a chest-protector and a very useful professional implement. On his right and a three-legged stool, sat the winsome Will Welsher—a cheery apple-cheeked ruffian whose flowing blonde chevelure and orbs of azure blue unmistakably betokened his Saxon ancestry, or would have done so had not the barbarous scissors of a county jailer recently relieved him of the former, while the effective punch of an athletic punter who had met and remembered him on his release had blackened the latter with singular completeness. Those who were admitted to Mr. Welsher's close intimacy said that William was all right when you know'd him: but they allowed that you *had* got to know him first, and many deemed it undesirable to improve even a slight acquaintance. The third of the three friends—for such they were—was a heavy-jowled old Castilian, whose swarthy countenance *might* have been all the better for a vigorous application of the soap of his native province, and might not, for there is sometimes a statute of limitations in these cases. The Spaniard was grave and sententious of speech. He wore a brown velvet coat and a shocking bad hat, and his best known alias was Luke the Lumberer.

RICHARD HENRY,
AUTHOR OF THE BURLESQUE, "MONTE CHRISTO, JUN.," ETC.
From Photographs by Samuel A. Walker, 230, Regent-street, and R. P. Estabrooke, 153, Fleet-street.

Better, far better, had it been for these three men had they severely let alone the Posada, &c., on the evening on which our story opens. Better certainly for themselves, better still for the community in general, but most of all better for the gentle reader, who would then have been spared—— But we anticipate.

Miguel el Magsmano, Will Welsher, and Luke the Lumberer, though for the time being *with* the Rampers of the Sierras, were evidently not *of* them.

Had the Spirit of Christmas circulated even a single quartern less freely, the abstraction of the trio would surely have been noticed, and would probably have been stigmatised (in the argot of the bandits) as "bloomin' uppishness."

But the band was too busy keeping Christmas to notice this—which was, perhaps, as well, for the three friends, though not the men to stick at trifles, would have had no scruple in sticking the entire band under its fifth rib if occasion required it.

Miguel, William, and Luke were old and tried comrades, and they had the courage of their convictions—which had been numerous. For many years they had worked together "on the joint," but had of late been separated owing to circumstances over which they had no control. Hence they had now much to talk over, and many plots to plan for future use.

While they stuck to business, and devised fresh means of carrying on the war against society, they were cheerful, light-hearted, devil-may-care, and jaunty.

But when in the course of conversation the past cropped up, which was on the average about every five minutes, El Magsmano and the Lumberer shuddered convulsively. Their teeth chattered instead of their tongues, and they eagerly buried their faces in the flowing bowl in order to escape observation.

Their companion, with the calm insouciance of his profession, affected not to notice these eccentricities. But years after it was remembered that he had laughed softly in his sleeve the while—a laugh of so peculiar a character that no sleeve could have stood it for anything like a lengthened period. Then turning away he would grind his teeth to impalpable powder, and utter remarks utterly unfit for publication; and then again cut into the conversation as though nothing had happened, with all the aplomb of a profes-ional quick-change artist.

Who said "Cherchez la femme" first? and what language did he say it in? What price Solomon for a sharp who fancied himself up to every move on the board of works of his period? What opinion did *he* have of——? But this is neither the time nor the place for conundrums, Besides, we are again anticipating.

Outside the wind howled fitfully, but otherwise all was still, and naught disturbed the silence of the virgin cork forest but the footfalls of a heavy-hoofed alguazil plodding his way stolidly through the thorny chapparal which bordered his beat.

"Dash my bloomin' buttons!" suddenly exclaimed Will Welsher: "if this ere ain't wot I call comfortable! Strike me pink, but it reminds yer of hold times, don't it, Mike? And the lovely Hinez!—ah she was a proper sort of girl *she* wos!—and when she disappeared——"

An unearthly screech, apparently proceeding from nowhere in particular, here made El Magsmano sit up and snort violently with terror.

"Santa Madre de Moses!" said the Italian, "phwat was that?"

"Wot's wot?" carelessly responded Mr. Welsher, who had profited by the confusion to dip his own beak somewhat heavily in the beaker which stood nearest him, and which happened to be El Magsmano's.

"Basta! basta! Hould yer whisht, ye omadhaun!" said Don Miguel, with delicate Italian irony. "Be jabers!—I mean Caramba!—there it is again!"

His agitation was terrible to witness. Either from agony or from imperfect make-up the strong man's olive complexion rapidly changed to peacock blue.

Luke the Lumberer was also visibly moved, but not for any considerable distance, and outwardly, at all events, he preserved the semblance of calmness.

"Bah!" said he, "it was probably only the wail of a wandering coyote, or perhaps the cry of the common cat (*Felis domestica*)."

This suggestion temporarily soothed the terrified Miguel, for he knew that the animal mentioned infests the canons, barrancas, and back yards of Los Diales in surprising numbers. He felt, however, that some explanation was due to his comrades; so, having taken a long pull, and a strong pull, and a pull which altogether emptied the flowing bowl, he commenced a narration which for sheer unadulterated horror has probably never been equalled, let alone excelled.

"You must know, then," said he, "that——"

* * *

"Outside, please! Time's up, gen-'lemen. Christmas Eve, doncher-know? *Must* close at twelve to-night—same as Saturday! Come, *out*side, please!"

It was the voice of the Chucker, and they knew that against it there was no appeal. So out into the black night the three friends wandered, the story yet untold. Was it *ever* told? Quien sabe? All we know is that ere they could say Jack Robinson—supposing they had wanted to say it, which they didn't—three alguazils of the E Division, who had been lying in ambush round the corner for some hours, popped out and collared our three heroes, and took them whither they had long been "wanted."

And as they went, the joybells burst forth into song, and everybody realised that it was Christmas—merry Christmas, which (fortunately, as some think) comes but once a year.

MR. GEORGE GROSSMITH AS "A SOCIETY CLOWN."

MR. JOHN LATEY, JUN.
AUTHOR OF "LOVE CLOUDS," "THE RIVER OF LIFE," &c.
From a Photograph by Mr. Edwin Debenham.

DIAMONDS LED; HEARTS ARE TRUMPS.

A STORY OF LONDON AND THE DIAMOND FIELDS.

BY JOHN LATEY, JUN.

CHAPTER I.

FIRST LOVE.

"WHY, 'Little Sunshine'! How are you?" comes in deep, earnest tones from a fair-bearded young fellow of five-and-twenty, as he gains the platform of Andrews' Travelling Theatre, and warmly shakes hands with the sunny-faced young "fairy" of the show. "Bright as ever, I see by your sparkling blue eyes, and dear little face, Mary. This is a welcome meeting, indeed, to me!"

"And to me, too, Willie—I mean Mr. Mills. I'm *so* glad you've not forgotten me, though it's an age since I saw you at our old pitch at the Diamond Fields."

"Is it likely I should forget my little sweetheart?" is the cheery response of the young man, as he makes way for the ascending members of the public, flocking to see the Richardsonian drama within.

Mr. Merriman, blithest of caravan clowns, stops his fun, and as cordially greets the newcomer as an old friend. And Mr. Andrews himself—known as "Merry Andrews" in "*the* profession"—pauses in his lusty exposition of the striking scene on the painted canvas ("Not a patch on what is to be seen hinside, ladies and gentlemen") to volubly receive his visitor with similar heartiness, and to reintroduce him to Mrs. Andrews at the receipt of custom.

"Missis is chubby as ever, Mr. Mills," runs on Merry Andrews glibly. "Always a-grumbling. Never satisfied. Same old scold"——

"Don't mind my old man, Sir," breaks in buxom Mrs. Andrews, slyly winking, and significantly touching the crown of her bonnet. "He 's still a little weak 'ere, Sir. But the sight of you does my old eyes good, Mr. Mills; that it does!"

"Dear old 'ooman," rattles on Mr. Andrews; "with all her hacidity, I love her still. Pity is she seldom *is* still! Ha! Ha! Had you there, Missis! While

BETWEEN LOVE & DUTY.

Mary 's the sunshine of the show, the Missis is its prop. Hence our *prop*-erty! D' you know" (dropping his husky voice to a confidential whisper) "the old 'ooman 's such a good 'un for looking arter the pieces that we 've saved enough from our tour in the Diamond and Gold Fields to bring us home to dear Old Hingland, and to rent a suburban or provincial playhouse into the bargain? Fact! I'm only a-keeping my 'and in now. I takes a pride in my show. Look around at them there Waxworks—at the Swings and Merry-go-rounds—at the Roller-Coaster, Toboggan, or Switchback: I 'll wager five pound not one on 'em 's doing so well as my show 'ere. Why? Why, friend,—'cause I 'm the tip-top of the purfession in my line. Like the great Henery Irving, I goes in for the elewation of the Richardson drama. I gives 'em slap-up scenery, hartistic lime-light, hoperatic moosic, and an ingenoo Helen Terry herself can't beat for true nateralness in 'Little Sunshine,' God bless her! They all like Polly. You should 'ave seen her benefit bokays at the Diamond Fields! Real brilliants in one on 'em. Thrown, I think, by your new Manager of the Crystal Mine, Mr. Cleaver—regular spoons on Polly! We 're jist a-going to begin. Step inside, and see 'ow she 's improved, Sir!"

"A word with you, Mr. Mills—a word for your private ear," whispered Mike O'Brien, the clown, ere Will can follow the Showman and "Little Sunshine" inside. "It 's tired I am of the stage intoirely. If ever you think of returning to the Cape Diamond Fields, I 'd like to go, too."

"Trust me to remember, Mick!" is the cheery response of Willie Mills, impelled to dart into the Show by reason of the diamond "bokay" allusions of Mr. Andrews.

* * * * *

The Sunday evening after this Palace Fair on one of the breezy northern heights of London finds "Little Sunshine" and the young man she had by a slip of the tongue at first addressed as "Willie" strolling arm-in-arm through Highgate woods.

"Tell me, Mary, how the dear old Veld River looked when you were there with the Show last year. 'Twas on the banks of the Veld I first met you, Mary, and gave you the name of 'Little Sunshine,' because you brought social 'Sunshine' to our mining town."

IN THE FLOODED DIAMOND MINE

"I'm afraid all the 'Sunshine' was reflected from you"—a shaft from her honest blue eyes, arched by high, laughing brows, penetrating to his heart. "The River Veld! I have always pleasant memories of the Veld. Its stream brings music to my ears—the music of the 'So Wie Du' waltz I danced with you at the fair when a mere girl"——

"Well do I recall the dance and the sweet tune—Waldman's, wasn't it?—we waltzed to on the green banks of the Veld. A soft air—soft as your sweet voice, Mary."

A flush of the dimpled face, and a tremor of the small hand resting lightly on his arm, make the tendrils of his heart thrill; and love for the fair maid, whose long golden hair catches the radiance of the setting sun, fills his soul.

"Mary, 'Little Sunshine'"—escapes from him in broken words, as he pauses in the woodland path, clasping her slender waist the while; "I feel I must speak out. The happiness of my life is concerned. Let me make a clean breast of it, and confess that since you and I met on the Veld, I have never once, Mary, seen any girl I could love. It is a man's love I feel for you, Mary. Be my wife, and I'll strive to make you happy for life, dearest" (emphasising his avowal with a tenderer pressure of the waist).

A lass to woo and win, indeed, looks Mary Metherell as she stands with downcast eyes by her lover's side; bewitching in her neat grey jacket and light grey dress, and grey hat. Her fair brows instinctively contract and her red lips quiver as she subdues the tell-tale heaving of her bosom, and lets her brain instead of her heart speak.

"You forget the difference in our positions," is the quiet answer. "Why, you're a Prince now," with a nervous flicker of a smile that soon dies out. "The son of the 'Diamond King,' it is not befitting that you should marry a poor mountebank, respectable though she has kept herself."

"Riches be hanged, Mary! You're far, far above rubies and diamonds as well to me," showering kisses upon her sweet face, and pressing "Little Sunshine" to his heart. "I've given you all my heart; and I'm determined to make you my own dear wife."

CHAPTER II.

DIAMONDS LED.

A real Summer night in London. The World of Fashion bidden to the grandest mansion in Belgrave-square. Without, brilliant carriages discharging their gossamer freights to swell the number of guests within the electric-lighted town-house of Mr. Alexander Mills, the millionaire, commonly called the "Diamond King."

Let the ball of pleasure roll never so swiftly under his roof, Mr. Mills ever prides himself on keeping his head cool. It is a square, shrewd head—the head of a man who persistently keeps an eye on the "main chance," and cultivates it from year's end to year's end. Here he is but little past middle-age, and he has made "his pile," having quickly accumulated a fortune beyond the dreams of avarice, mainly from the prolific Crystal Diamond Mine in South Africa. He now entertains the ambition of founding a house that may some day rank with the highest in the land. Having scrutinised the pedigrees in "Burke's Peerage" pretty closely, has he not found that one favourite way in which great families had been "made" was by the intermarriage of heirs with wealthy or titled heiresses, thus accumulating money and influence generation after generation till it was an easy step into the coveted haven of the House of Lords. Well; why should Alexander hesitate whilst these new heights were to be scaled? He's got the "scrip," he's got the son, he's got the money, too. Why should Alexander wait?

The air in each gaily-lit room is heavy with roses as Willie Mills saunters through in quest of his father. He finds him in the snug card-room. Floral shades of pink subdue the light from the electric globes, which cast soft radiance on the party of four playing whist at the green-baize covered table: Mr. Mills's vis-à-vis Viscount Lofthouse, Sir Cornewall Coper partner with Lady Kinross.

"Well, Will, what do you think of my hand?" smilingly asks the father of his son. "Diamonds lead; hearts are trumps, my lad!"

"I believe in hearts as trumps, father; but I mustn't betray your hand."

"No, Will"—Mr. Mills here plays King of Diamonds—"or Lady Kinross may go in for diamond cut diamond."

"No, no; not I, Mr. Mills," answers Lady Kinross in her oiliest tones. "You see I have nothing higher than Queen—my last diamond, alas!—if my partner will pardon me for saying so. I really must crave a supply of brilliants from your Crystal Mine."

"Good! Very good, your Ladyship," chuckles Mr. Mills. "I may tell you the shares in the Crystal Diamond Mine never stood higher. I'll drop you a hint when to buy."

Long after this game of whist, Willie Mills remembers remarking as peculiar the quick exchange of glances between Lord Lofthouse and Sir Cornewall Coper at this good-natured promise of his father—remembers, too, this fragment of a low-voiced dialogue he accidentally overhears that same night between Sir Cornewall Coper and Lord Lofthouse, Sir Cornewall being the speaker—"We'll have the Mine in our own hands before long. I've squared Cleaver!"

* * * * *

Half an hour later, Mr. Mills, who has cheerfully lost his rubber in titled company, engages in an earnest conversation with his son in a fern-decked ante-room leading to the ball-room. Pointing to a superb specimen of the Society young lady, content enough to swing round in the arms of Captain Welter to the haunting strains of Waldteufel's last waltz, yet meantime wideawake enough to the good points of any opulent match; Mr. Mills reopens a question he has broached before.

"Look at Lady Kinross's daughter Arabella, Will! What grace! What charms! What breeding! What lineage! All the virtues combined! Go in, and win and wed her, my boy! Lady Kinross as good as hinted she's yours for the asking! Win her as wife, and you'll make your old dad happy. I've set my heart on this match, Will. Winning Arabella, you will not only gain one of the best-connected lassies in Society; but *I*, with Lord Kinross's influence, could become M.P. for Purseton. Once in the House, a title would be within my grasp. But all would go to you, Will—my millions, title, lands, everything. For you are all the world to me—you are all that's left, Will, since your dear mother died."

Suddenly placed between Love and Duty, Will hesitates not for a moment. He has pledged his troth. His whole life, he is proud to think, is now bound up in Mary's.

"Father, it cannot be," whispers back Will. "I am engaged to Mary—to 'Little Sunshine'—of Andrews' Show. You remember her—the 'Little Sunshine' of our old mining days, when you and I worked shoulder to shoulder for diamonds. We are to be married"——

"What!" wellnigh hisses Mr. Mills, his square face paling with anger, as all his worldly hopes are crushed by this resolution of Will's. "My son engaged to a show-girl!"

"Father, don't say anything against Mary. She's as good as gold—far and away better than any fine Drawingroom lady I have ever seen. Besides, she is my wife to be."

"Confound you, then! Go your own road. You're no longer son of mine. Quit my house. I disown you. Carve out your own fortune, if you can!"

"Let us part friends, then," steadily makes answer Will, offering his hand, which remains unclasped, however. "No? You may yet need a son's help. When that time comes, call me, father, and I will come. Good-bye!"

CHAPTER III.

HEARTS ARE TRUMPS.

Behold Willie next in the blue jersey and rough garb of a Crystaltown diamond miner—far away in the heart of South Africa, in the region rich with gold and precious stones—in the wide-spreading town that sprang up as if by enchantment on the banks of the Veld River.

Happy in the love of his true-hearted, sweet-voiced wife, still "Little Sunshine" to him, although their home is only a two-roomed iron shanty on the fringe of Crystaltown, Will grieves not for the loss of empty station. His strong right arm, trained to mining in his youth, and schooled on the Isis in his Oxford days, gains a simple livelihood for both. Their poverty knits them together with an affection all the warmer for the trials they have undergone. They are particularly cheery this evening, for here, sharing tea with them, is their stanch friend, Mike O'Brien, who has washed the paint from his face long ago, and doffed the motley of Mr. Merriman of Andrew's Travelling Show for the staid civilian costume of the Crystaltown Postmaster.

"I tell you what, Will," murmurs Mike in a low tone across the table, as soon as Mary has left to put her bonnet on; "I don't like that Cleaver, the Manager of the mine, at all, at all. Devil a bit of good in that varmint, take my word for it."

"I'm quite of your opinion, Mike. But you can't hang a man on suspicion. I don't relish his sneaking attentions to Mary; but they don't hurt me. I know Mary's true as steel to me, God bless her!"

"I'm wid you intoirely there, Will. Bless her heart! Wasn't she the darlint who kept pure as snow, and shed the sunshine of her purty face and purty blue eyes on our Show, many's the year? No, it's thrue for you, wan can't hang a man on suspicion; but, wist! he can get the dirty kick out for fraud."

"Granted, Mike! But since Cleaver's been Manager, the yearly output hasn't decreased by a single carat."

"Thrue for you, again, Master Will. But neither has it increased anything worth speaking of. Remimber, the diamond finds have been something wonderful this year. Now, be prepared to hear a secret, Will, before ye go down the mine to-night. A London letter came this morning addressed to Cleaver. I knew him to be a wrong 'un—instinctively, like a woman does. I did what I've niver done before, Will: I steamed it. In short, I did what the Home Government does when it suspects treason. The envelope opened, I read what was inside—enough to show me some infernal plot is on foot. The letter was signed 'Cornewall Coper.' The long and the short av it was this: Cleaver to have tin thousand pounds if he 'watered' the mine, and wired Coper in time. What could he mane, Will?"

"Mean, Mike! Only rogues can tell. But thanks for the secret. Forewarned is forearmed. (*Aside*) Hush! here's Mary! (*Rising to put on his mining-cap and grasp his mining-lamp*). Time's up! Mary's bonnie face gives me the signal. Will you stroll up to the mine with us, Mike?"

* * * * *

Deep down in a cutting of the Crystal Mine, which has yielded millions to his father and co-partners of the Limited Company, Willie Mills (his identity hidden, under the name of Brown, from the Manager) works in company with Kaffir Jim, a native who has grown strongly attached to him. They are engaged towards the

further end of the five hundred feet level—the end abutting on the banks of the Veld River. Is it his fancy, or is it fact that the liquid music of the river has of late penetrated into the mine? Will is set a-thinking. What can be the drift of Cleaver's conspiracy with Sir Cornewall Coper? To his certain knowledge, there had been during the past few months huge finds of diamonds, some uncommonly fine. A diamondiferous vein had been struck, that still yielded very largely. Surely, this rich yield would send up the shares in the London Stock Exchange directly the good tidings reached England! Had he not with his own eyes seen the milky-white diamonds in the rough as he dug spade after spade full of the blue ground, and, with an irrepressible spasm of covetousness, gazed at the fortune vanishing from him up the shaft in the skip? If his father, the sturdy Alexander Mills of his old mining days, were only at the Crystal Mine now to safeguard his own interests, and defeat the machinations of this scheming Cleaver! What could the undertaking to "water" the mine mean?

A roar as of rushing waters is the answer that smites Will's ears.

"Run for your life, Massa! De river hab bust into de mine. I'se gwain to make for de shaft. Quick, Massa! Follow me!"

A race for life!

The thunder of the flood grows deafening. Pressure of tons upon tons of water sweeps away the timber supports of the five hundred feet level nearest the Veld. Falling logs and drowning miners are borne along in the merciless torrent—which Will feels is gaining on them at every stride, though they run their fleetest through the narrow subterranean gallery. They are presently elbowing and fiercely racing against Death with a cluster of brother miners, each fighting desperately, as it were, for dear life—the tumultuous waters dashing and spluttering after them only fifty short yards in their wake.

Thought quickened by deadly peril, Will reasons as he flies. The danger in front of him is realised. To reach the end of the drift would too probably be but to be whirled by the inundation down the shaft to swell the number of victims who must speedily be engulfed in the six hundred feet drift!

Will recognises that he must, at any cost, now or never reach the higher level, the timber beams of which he can at this juncture discern a little ahead to the left. Will shouts the word of counsel into the ear of quick-witted Kaffir Jim, who, lightly clad in his body-cloth alone, springs up the side in advance with the agility of a springbok, and, safe for the moment himself, turns round to offer a helping hand to Will, who quickly clambers up, however, by himself.

Strong men, shrieking and groaning in their agony, are a minute after carried past them by the relentless flood. Another minute, and a despairing wail of infinite pathos tells Will and Kaffir Jim that the surging waters have swept down the shaft the comrades they were but just now elbowing in the race for life or death—brave, manly comrades, for the loss of whom tears of heartfelt sorrow spring to the eyes of the surviving white and coloured man alike.

The foaming waters, increasing in volume, rise higher and higher, and remind Will and Kaffir Jim of their own imminent danger.

The terrible wail ringing in their ears, they grope their way upwards slowly to the four hundred feet level, but dare not approach the shaft here either. Will knows full well the Veld is pouring its waters into the mine with unabated force; and that the angry flood must soon rise up the shaft, and block exit from all the lower levels. No pausing yet a while to rest and grasp the fell situation in all its bearings. Footsore, bruised, aching in every joint, they push onwards and upwards. Long hours seem to have sped by when the echoes of the flood wax fainter and fainter, and Kaffir Jim at last helps Will into a darksome side-cutting hitherto unknown to him. Exhausted in body, Will drops down in this nook of refuge, and gives reins to the gloomy fears that possess him. He recalls the pith of the letter to Cleaver: "Water the mine, and wire the news to London, and you shall have £10,000!" Good Heavens! Could this fearful flooding of the mine be Cleaver's work? If so, what earthly good could the destruction of the Crystal Mine do anyone in London? Why, the mine was never before so rich in diamonds! "Water the mine!" There could be but one reason for such a diabolical proceeding on Cleaver's part. The treacherous Manager must, Will at length concludes, be in the plot to make-believe that the mine is for the time-being valueless, and so induce his father to sell all his shares at a great sacrifice, the London schemers buying all in at the lowest figure, in order to realise scores of thousands when, the mine pumped dry, the extraordinary finds of diamonds would astonish the world, and send the shares of the Crystal Mine up higher than ever! Will sends a prayer on high that he may yet be enabled to escape to wreak vengeance on Cleaver, and in time to frustrate the completion of his triumph.

"Massa, look up at de end ob de cutting," suddenly exclaims Kaffir Jim. "Ickle chink let in much light, I tink."

"Good Heavens! It's the dawn shooting down through a cleft in the old open mine. Blessed sight! Look, Jim! The hole grows larger. Brave hearts! It's the day shift digging away for their lives."

* * * * *

With what a depth of devotion Mary loves her husband can be read from the wistful smile which now and again dimples her rosy cheeks—smile born of a new joy budding within her—as she busily plies her needle in their humble little sitting-room, little thinking any mining disaster would threaten his precious life.

A murmur of voices in the street causes Mary to pause in her stitching, and to look with nervous anxiety out of window.

She sees the pale face of Mr. Cleaver, the hateful Manager of the mine, scrutinising her, and is filled with a vague fear.

He hurriedly enters the room, takes Mary's hand, and retains it in his until she impatiently withdraws it from his grasp, and, heedless of the look of sympathy conjured up in his colourless face, shortly asks the reason of his visit.

"Mary," he quickly says, not to be deterred from fulfilling his set purpose, "I come to beg you to remember that, whatever happens, you may count upon my friendship, my help, my"—— seizing Mary by the waist, while his small eyes glisten, and gripping her so firmly that "Little Sunshine" cannot release herself from his odious embrace till he has declared: "For years, Mary, you know, I have loved you with an earnestness Time cannot subdue. I shall very soon be rich—very rich; and I want you to know, Mary, that all my riches shall be freely yours if you will—when free—only accept me!"

THE AUSTRALIAN PARROT.

The last Cunard steamer which arrived at Liverpool brought a great living curiosity. It is an odd-looking parrot, whose conversation made the cabins lively during the voyage, and whose wisdom filled the forecastle with awe. Externally he is unimpressive. Instead of the usual green-and-yellow plumage of parrots, he has a grey suit, that is not at all handsome. His form is rather striking, however, as he is as big as an owl, and his head is remarkably wide and flattened in front. Across the top of his head is a queer ridge of feathers, at the base of which there is a dark marking, making him look like a profound scholar of a bird, who has pushed his spectacles back from his forehead, rumpling up his hair. The parrot is at present rather mopish. He evidently has not yet been able to reconcile himself to his new surroundings. Among the party of gentlemen who greeted the parrot's owner on his arrival was a member of a well-known wholesale drug-house of Liverpool, who sympathetically inquired of the parrot, "What do you want, Poly?" The parrot startled him by the reply, delivered in a gruff tone and with slow emphasis, quite unlike the rapid, rasping ejaculations of most talking parrots: "I——want——to——go——home!" Home is now some 14,000 miles away, for the parrot was brought from Australia. He is an African bird, bought when young from a Sydney bird-fancier, by Mr. Alfred Hay, one of the great sheep-breeders of New South Wales. Mr. Hay's estate, known as Boomanoomana, is on the Murray river. It contains about 300,000 acres, and pastures a quarter of a million of sheep. It is remote from any town, the nearest post-office being the little hamlet of Mulwala. The piano in Mr. Hay's house had to be hauled by waggon about 100 miles from the railway station. In a family so isolated from society, and so dependent on its own resources for entertainments, the odd-looking grey parrot had a good school. He soon developed an astounding aptitude for speech, and the whole family took a lively interest in his education. Talking parrots are generally swearing parrots. Mr. Hay gave strict orders that the parrot should not be allowed to use oaths. If the parrot picked up a naughty word from a servant he was promptly cuffed, and so decorous became his speech that he was called the Deacon. Eventually the servants were afraid to swear or do anything wrong in his presence, as the Deacon would be apt to solemnly report the fact to the family. The present owner of Deacon made the parrot's acquaintance last autumn, which in Australia corresponds with spring in England, and is the sheep-shearing season. That is a time of great bustle and activity on a sheep range. An army of labourers are collected into a camp, for the gathering of the sheep into paddocks, handling and packing the fleece, and hauling to market, takes many hands. At Boomanoomana two hundred men were kept busily employed at shearing alone. The operation is not near so nice and difficult as with English sheep, for in Australia, owing to the mild climate, the fleece does not crinkle or mat, and the wool is straight. Shearing is a factory process, instead of an individual manipulation. Helpers keep a continuous procession of sheep moving from a paddock to the shearers. About three sweeps of the long shears will cut off the fleece on one side. The struggling animal is flopped over. Snip, snip, snip! The fleece on the other side is off; the shorn sheep is released and wildly plunges down the fenced passages leading to another paddock. It was during such a scene as this that Deacon's present owner first saw the gray parrot. Deacon always enjoyed excitement, and some one of Mr. Hay's family had hung its cage where it could see the shearers at work. Deacon was in a great flutter, and he had much to say. If he heard an oath, "Hush, you wicked beggar!" he would scream at the offender. The thing that most interested him was the occasional snipping of the sheep's hide. In such rapid work the shearers would not unfrequently slice off a piece of skin and draw blood. The practice was to give the sore place a rub with the well-known remedy, St. Jacobs Oil, which is in high favour in the colony. Deacon heard so much about St. Jacobs Oil that he got his phrases about it very pat. If a sheep had a sore or was nicked by the shears, he would shake his feathers, jump from perch to perch excitedly and shout: "St. Jacobs Oil!" "Use St. Jacobs Oil!" "Rub on the Oil." Again he would sententiously announce: "St. Jacobs Oil conquers pain," in recollection of the phrase on every bottle, and which he often heard repeated. The gentleman visiting the range was on a hunting trip into the interior of the country when he called on Mr. Hay. He naturally took a great fancy to Deacon, and Mr. Hay finally presented the bird to him. At Sydney, Deacon's linguistic powers attracted great attention, and the Editor of the *Sydney Daily News* wrote an article describing the parrot's great intelligence. Deacon's owner left Australia last autumn, taking the Pacific Mail steamer to San Francisco. While in that city, Deacon was the subject of many notices in the newspapers. His owner lodged in the Palace Hotel, an enormous structure, whose extensive interior courtyard is laid off in lawns and gardens. Deacon, soon after his arrival, was hung out on a piazza overlooking the courtyard. As a coloured servant was rushing by, he shouted: "I say, you beggar, where's the sheep?" The tone was so gruff and peremptory, and the voice so unaccountable to the startled darkey, who hadn't noticed the parrot, that, in his fright, he dropped his tray and smashed the chinaware. "Rub it with St. Jacobs Oil!" blandly remarked the parrot. The parrot went with his owner across the American Continent, and recently crossed the Atlantic to this country, so that he has pretty nearly circumnavigated the globe. He was christened the "Doctor" by the sailors during the voyage to England, from his habit of recommending his favourite remedy. If he saw anyone get a knock or bruise, or limp as if from pain, "Rub it with St. Jacobs Oil" would be his solemn advice. He picked up some sea phrases, and in rough weather he would cry, "Oh—h—h, Steward!" with an amusing sea-sickish drawl. He has not yet recovered his vivacity since his arrival, and except an occasional "Oh, dear me!" or a "I wish I was home!" has little to say. His owner thinks, however, that he will soon come around, and that as soon as he gets used to our climate he will begin to take an interest in English sights.

"Where's Will?" angrily demands the trembling wife, resolutely tearing herself from the man she has grown to loathe. "Where's Will? You would never have dared to address me in this infamous way had Will been near. (*Hearing the clatter in the street increasing.*) Is anything the matter with the mine? Is my poor husband in danger? Oh, pray relieve my suspense!"

"I had come to prepare you in what I deemed the most considerate way for the bad news," is the icy rejoinder. "A calamity *has* happened at the mine, and"——

"And you shall swing for it, scoundrel!" bursts in Mike O'Brien, rushing in, and well nigh throttling the sinister Cleaver, aghast at the intrusion.

To poor Mary, who had turned white at the terrible tidings, and had to hold the table to save herself from falling, Mike hastens, after flinging the dastardly Cleaver on one side, and comforts her with a word of hope. While the villanous contriver of the catastrophe (hurling the threat "You shall pay for this, libellous ruffian," at O'Brien) deems it discreet to cower out of the room to seek safety in flight, Mike consoles and strengthens Mary by telling her how splendidly the rescue-party of miners are working to save their imprisoned comrades.

Action is the best solace for sorrow. So in action Mike determines to engross Mary. Pressing her ashen lips together, she nerves herself for the task set her, and, with a fervent prayer in her heart, bravely goes with Mike to add her woman's help to the band of volunteers nobly digging through the side of the abandoned open mine to succour the incarcerated miners.

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"Mary! My beloved!" The words of joy spring to Will's lips when, on finding himself with faithful Jim once more under the clear sky, he recognises that his fair young wife, who clasps him to her glad bosom with a sigh of relief, has been among those who delved the hardest, spade in hand, to save them. How Will and Kaffir Jim next wring the hands of Mike O'Brien and the steadfast miners who have toiled with pick and shovel by Mary's side through the long night to cut a way through to the mine, may be imagined.

"Friends," breaks in Will, as soon as Kaffir Jim has refreshed himself with a meal and a draught of eau-de-vie; "do you follow Jim now back into the mine. God speed you in your search for survivors! For me, I have urgent work to do above ground. Does anyone know if Mr. Cleaver has left Crystaltown? Started soon after the flood burst in, did he, Mike? On horseback for Porterstown, nearest telegraph station? Then he has six hours' start in a twelve hours' journey. I can't help that. I must start in pursuit. Inspan your swiftest horse to the mail-cart, Mike; and I'll be with you in the twinkling of an eye. Would to goodness we had acted on your hint before, Mike, and checkmated that black-hearted villain, Cleaver!"

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The issue of Will's drive may be best told in the words of Willie Mills himself as he sits, ere the end of the same month, over the walnuts and the wine in the Belgravia dining-room of his thoroughly reconciled father, who begs him to recount to "Little Sunshine" and himself the story of his memorable telegram.

"The tale can be compressed into a nutshell, father. Saved from the flooded mine by the good aid of Mary yonder and of my mates, I seemed to be driven by Fate to fly in pursuit of Cleaver. I left Crystaltown by the new road. Seeing it would have been next to impossible to overtake him, with the scoundrel's long start, Fate was considerate enough to pitch me out of the mail-cart on to a patch of shrub, which obligingly broke my fall. There was a tent close by, and from it came a peal of English laughter—doubtless occasioned by the neatness with which the frisky nag capsized the cart and pitched me over, unhurt. The strangers, among the jolliest and best-hearted fellows I have ever met, proved to be a party of engineers belonging to the Eastern and South African Telegraph Company. They were engaged in extending the telegraph wires to Crystaltown. I jumped at the opportunity. I told my story, and appealed to the chief to help me to outstrip Cleaver in wiring news of the disaster to London. You know the rest. By some magic of telegraphy, the kindly head-engineer there and then put my message on the wire four hours before Cleaver could reach Porterstown; and I rejoice to know you received my words in time to be forewarned that the flooding of the Crystal Mine was but a vile plot to depreciate its real value, and consequently in time to hinder you from selling your shares at considerable loss to the company sharks. Authorised by you, I left a trusty steward at the head of the mine in Mick O'Brien. I congratulate you, father, that those black sheep, Lord Lofthouse and Sir Cornewall Coper, have left their country for their country's good. As for Cleaver, he merited a worse fate than that which befell him—a shot through the brain from a mounted patrol as he rode off to escape arrest."

"Ah, Will," is the quiet rejoinder of Mr. Mills, "you cannot tell how truly glad I am to have you and Mary here by my side. You cannot tell how sincerely I grieve to think of the mournful fate my false pride might have driven you to. I have already seen that the widows and orphans who lost their breadwinners are well provided for. Be sure, I shall hope Hearts may continue to be Trumps till the end of my game of life! I willingly give up Vanity Fair; and shall look for all my happiness to come in dear 'Little Sunshine' here and yourself, Will, my noble son!"

FAIRLEIGH LOCK: A METRICAL MELODRAMA.

BY WILLIAM MACKAY.

MR. WILLIAM MACKAY,
AUTHOR OF "THE POPULAR IDOL," ETC.
From a Photograph by the Van der Velde Light, 183, Regent-street.

Through Fairleigh Lock by learned St. Bride's
The gownsmen daily row,
And linger by the old lock-house
To chat with Dulcie Snowe.
A smile for all, a word for all,
Her heart is but for one,
And him she dares not dream to wed
The old Squire's only son.

As softly fades the dying day,
Less flushed than Dulcie's cheek,
She prays young George to stop the words
She must not hear him speak.
"Oh! by your father's pride," she pleads,
"And by your mother's pain,
I bid you leave me once for all,
Nor seek me out again!"

The moon gleams pale through twilight grey,
Like cloistered maiden's brow;
Yet paler still, and passion white,
Young George's face is now.
"Heartless!" he cries, with bitter curse
That haunts her evermore:
"What sins I sin, what fate I share,
The blame be at your door!"

As winter wanes and summer shines,
The gownsmen by the stream
Discourse of George's town career
And darken Dulcie's dream:
How George is far the fastest man
St. Bride's has yet sent down.
His reckless play, his orgies hard
Are bywords up in town.

Then from the Hall comes whispered news—
The Squire's cast off his son,
And o'er his fall the mother breaks
Her silent heart alone.
To Dulcie now his parting curse
Cries louder than before:
"What sins I sin, what fate I share,
The blame be at your door!"

She seems to hear his very voice
Come floating on the tide;
And thither now she takes her skiff
And peers from side to side,
Till in a shadow of the bridge
She spies a figure tall.
She holds her breath, and edges near
To catch the words let fall.

"Broken and lost! my final plunge
I make in sight of home.
Oh! Dulcie, Dulcie!—but for you
This end had never come!"
"Hold, George!" she shrieks, and with a spring
Clings fast about his neck.
"I'll save you, love!" "Ah God!" he sighs,
"What need to save a wreck?"

As winters wane and summers shin
New gownsmen chat and stroll;
And in their bandied commonplace
Is balm for Dulcie's soul.
They talk of George as soundest man
E'er nursed by good St. Bride:
Of Dulcie as the fairest wife
On all the river-side.

JOSIE'S CHRISTMAS MORNING PRAYER.

KATE PEVERILL'S FLIGHT.

BY J. PULLAN.

—:o:—

"Seize the car, every one of you—quick, for Heaven's sake, or we shall lose them both, and the balloon as well!"

Too late, Mr. Lofthouse; too late!

The "Mammoth" had, after a splendid voyage, descended near a goodly homestead in the Midlands, where Mr. Lofthouse, the aeronaut, knew he would receive assistance and means for conveying his balloon to the nearest railway-station. It was five o'clock in the afternoon, and, as he hoped and expected, the whole household and all the farm labourers, seeing the aerial monster descend in the pasture fronting the mansion, rushed up and rendered help. Chief of the animated group was Phineas Peverill, gentleman-farmer and portly yeoman, his wife, a comely matron of forty-five, two daughters scarcely out of their teens, and one son.

MR. J. PULLAN,
ONE OF LONDON'S ABLEST JOURNALISTS.
From a Photograph by T. Fall, 10, Baker-street, W.

Domestic servants and dairymaids stood staring, aghast with wonder and delight. The wind having fallen, the "Mammoth," balanced to a nicety by the use of valve and ballast, touched the earth quite softly. Out stepped, first the aeronaut, and after him Colonel Evansdale, both keeping a firm hold of the edge of the car, leaving within a fair-looking young man in charge of valve and rope. A dozen sturdy labourers gave, at the same moment, ready aid.

* * * * *

"Do let me get into the car, just for one moment?" exclaimed Kate Peverill; "it must be delightful! Here, Jack, give me your hand." Then, placing her dainty little foot, encased in the nattiest of house slippers, on her brother's broad palm, the sprightly girl sprang into the car as lightly as in the same way she often sprang on the back of Madcap, her pony.

Had the aeronaut seen the waving of the branches of that solitary ash on the hillside, a couple of hundred yards away, he would have known that more than a zephyr was approaching through the mountain gorges. But he had not seen this indication; and scarcely had he uttered the words with which this story opens than a gust of wind, catching the immense volume of the balloon and swaying the car to and fro, knocked over the men like nine-pins. The "Mammoth," thus released, soared away into space, carrying aloft Miss Kate Peverill, aged nineteen, and Lieutenant Harold Ericsson, of the Danish Navy, who, with Colonel Evansdale, was studying ballooning for military purposes.

* * * * *

The horror and consternation of the terrestrial group may be imagined.

"Oh, Phin, dear, whatever is to be done?" exclaimed Mrs. Peverill, placing her hands on her husband's shoulder.

Mr. Peverill's gaze was fixed on the ascending and receding balloon, and from that was turned to the aeronaut and his companion, and was on them, as they felt, looking unutterable things.

"Let me assure you, Madam, and you, Sir," said Colonel Evansdale, "that your daughter is perfectly safe. Mr. Eriesson has ascended twenty times; he has complete control of the balloon, and will be sure to descend safely. Your daughter will be home again this very evening, most likely."

"Most likely!" ejaculated Mr. Peverill, desperately.

"You are certain to hear of her by telegraph within two hours. Lieutenant Ericsson is an officer of the Danish Navy, and my personal friend. Pray let me make myself known to you."

On receiving the card of the Colonel, and recognising his courteous and reassuring manner, Mr. and Mrs. Peverill's fears were somewhat allayed. Jack Peverill and Grace, his sister of twenty-one, fervently hoped this would at last cure their sister of all ambition for daring exploits.

* * * * *

The situation of the two young people in the car was slightly embarrassing.

"I thought my breath had clean gone!" gasped the lady as the car steadied after shooting up a thousand feet. "You will descend at once, of course?"

"Certainly, I will attempt to descend at once," Mr. Ericsson answered, "if you are terrified; but the wind is in force again, and a rapid descent over these woodlands might, I must warn you, be most dangerous."

"I am not a bit frightened, much less terrified—at least, not for myself. I am thinking of my father and mother and Grace and Jack," replied the girl, as she glanced over the car and saw woodlands and pastures and farms and hamlets and villages and roadways flying at railway speed, twelve hundred feet beneath, as the balloon sped over them.

"Do not fear on their account, young lady. My friend, Colonel Evansdale, who came in the balloon and left it with Mr. Lofthouse, will assure them that you are as perfectly safe here as if you were driving on that road, and far safer than if you were in that express crawling northwards," pointing to a toy-like train miles away to the left of them.

"Thank you—thank you very much indeed; but"—— and a blush mantled her cheek as she thought of her position here, with a stranger in the car of a balloon. She was hatless; a profusion of raven-black hair, accidentally disengaged from the ribbon that had bound it, was streaming over her shoulders. She was attired in a light cream-coloured dress of gauzy material, bound at the waist by blue ribbon. She was slightly over medium height, of graceful figure, a deep brunette, with dark and lustrous eyes. Her unselected companion was twenty-five, of manly build, and fair open countenance, with the lightest of hair and moustache, and clear blue eyes.

"I must express my regret," said he, "at the accident which has placed you in an embarrassing position. I can, however, assure you of your safety, and we will descend as soon as practicable. Permit me to give you my name;" and he took from his card-case and handed to the lady his card, as the only further assurance he could give.

"I see you are a Dane, a countryman of our Princess?"

"Yes; and I am glad you have mentioned that associat[illegible]."

"I feel safe enough now," said she, with a smile; "and, of course, it is of no use to lament. What a most novel mode of travelling! How very easy it is!"

"Can you bear to look at the landscape beneath and around?"

"Yes; how very grand it is! I do not feel the least giddy."

(Poor Miss Kate was mentally resolving never to be a giddy girl again. It is, nevertheless, a fact well known to aerial travellers that none of the peculiar dread experienced on looking over a precipice or down from a high tower is felt in the car of a balloon.)

* * * * *

"We are now, I must tell you," said the aerial officer, "more than three thousand feet high, and are travelling, I guess, about forty miles an hour, in a north-westerly direction."

"And pray where will that land us?"

"Among the Cumberland lakes, if this strong wind keeps up."

"I hope not so far away from home as that," said Miss Kate, with a sigh; "at least, not quite so far. My name, I should tell you, Sir, is Kate Peverill. You saw my father and mother. We farm about a thousand acres of our own land."

"So do my father and mother and sisters, in Denmark; but not such good land as yours, I fear," rejoined the Dane.

"Are we still ascending?" inquired she.

"Yes. The sun's rays are expanding the gas and lightening it; but if you are willing to rise a little higher and enter that bank of clouds just ahead, the moisture will have a condensing effect, and may assist us to descend."

"I must trust entirely to your discretion, and I do not mind saying that this is a most delightful way of going across country."

A bag of sand ballast was emptied, and the balloon soared grandly through a bank of cloud, enveloping for a minute or two the travellers in thick, cool mist.

A little later, rising clear above the clouds, they found themselves in a scene of celestial grandeur rarely witnessed even by experienced aeronauts. The balloon swung serenely in mid-air. A thousand feet below were soft, fleecy clouds, entirely shutting out all sight and sound of the earth. On the left, as the balloon gently rose, enormous masses of cloud-hills, illumined by the golden rays of the setting sun, appeared to descend slowly and majestically. Far away, on the right, was a beautiful rainbow; and, high overhead, the vast

clear blue dome of the empyrean, cloudless and bright, overarched the celestial scene.

"Oh, Sir, this is wonderful! It is enchanting! gorgeous! How solemn and impressive is this stillness; and how exquisitely beautiful!"

Those last three words exactly expressed the thoughts of Harold Ericsson as he gazed on the graceful figure and lovely features of his gentle companion. Exhilarated by the rarefied atmosphere, enthralled by the celestial view, the girl appeared to the young Dane charming beyond expression. Her every movement was gracefulness itself. Her pretty hand, wrist, and arm, as she shaded her eyes for a moment, would have captivated a less sensitive heart than that of Harold Ericsson. Her countenance, as she gazed with rapture on the scene, was as that of one inspired, and was graven on Harold's heart from that time for evermore.

"The clouds below are moving slowly; the wind has fallen; I think we had better descend. We are now two and a half miles above the earth," said the gentleman.

"Yes," replied his companion, half interrogatively, half abstractedly, in the softest of tones. "I never can thank you sufficiently for that glorious view. I shall never forget it—never, never!"

Even as she spoke the "Mammoth" sank into and through the clouds, and was rapidly descending.

"We shall go down all right now," said the young Dane, "and I hope you will not be bumped much."

"Shall I remain standing or shall I crouch?"

"Crouch, please, and beware of the ring."

"Ring? What ring?" said the girl in surprise, as she reclined by the side of the car.

"I mean the ring below the neck of the balloon, which may strike the car when we touch the earth. Remain seated, please, until the people get hold of the car."

The wind having completely subsided, the air was almost motionless, and before the car quite touched the earth a number of men, who had run forward to assist, seized it in firm grip.

"Thank you, friends. You hold well."

This said to the men. Mr. Ericsson, offering his hand to Miss Peverill, with a look in those blue eyes she often afterwards loved to recall in reverie, said gently, "Now, if you please, fair passenger, allow me to assist you out of the car."

They had landed near a farm-house—where they knew not—and were in the midst of a group somewhat similar to that which they had left on ascending.

* * * * *

"Why, bless my eyes! No, it cannot be! Yes it is, Kate Peverill! Well, of all the mad freaks I ever heard of!"

"Oh! Mr. Marsden, is that really you?—and Mrs. Marsden!—and Dolly, my dear, dear Dolly!" and, to the intense astonishment of Mr. Harold, his fellow traveller rushed into the arms of the buxom Dolly Marsden, her school companion, whom she had parted from scarce a year before. The aeronauts had, in fact, alighted on the farm of old and most intimate friends of the Peverills, fully fifty miles away from the home of the latter, known as King's Manor.

"Don't judge me, Mr. Marsden, till I explain. I was taken up by accident; indeed I was. Was I not, Mr. Ericsson?"

That young man briefly explained the matter, and was pressed by Mr. Marsden to follow them into the house as soon as the balloon was packed.

"Please telegraph first to Mr. Peverill in your name, Sir, assuring him of his daughter's perfect safety. I must take the telegram to the office myself, wherever it is, and see it dispatched."

This done, it was found the last train southward had left, and that it would be necessary to remain at Langholm over night. Miss Peverill was, of course, a welcome guest of the Marsdens. Mr. Ericsson was with difficulty persuaded to accept of their hospitality. He passed the night at the village inn, and next morning accompanied Miss Kate Peverill and Miss Marsden to King's Manor, and restored the involuntary runaway to her parents. Colonel Evansdale had remained at the village of Kingsholm close by, and he and Mr. Ericsson took lunch with the Peverill family. The adventure was naturally the first subject of conversation; but when from that the talk turned on farming, Mr. Peverill and his son were agreeably surprised to find in Mr. Ericsson a man exceptionally well informed on scientific culture; while Mrs. Peverill was no less interested in hearing of the methods which had recently effected great improvement in Danish butter. They hoped, they said heartily, to see him again. They were all going on a visit to London in the next week, and he assured them, with a degree of sincerity which was appreciated by at least one member of the family, that it would give him the greatest pleasure to be permitted to call upon them and conduct them over a special dairy in which his father was interested.

This was in September. When, in the following June, Harold Ericsson stood beside Kate Peverill, his bride, in the village church at Kingsholm, the rural congregation were right in their opinion that never were more beautiful bride and handsome bridegroom joined together in holy matrimony. They went for their honeymoon to the Cumberland lakes.

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"COMING EVENTS CAST THEIR SHADOWS BEFORE."

THE CHRISTMAS GOOSE MARKET.

THE WHIRLWIND RIDE.

A NEW ZEALAND STORY.

BY WILLIAM SENIOR ("REDSPINNER").

THE old stories repeat themselves; it is often only in the manner of their ending that there is variety. My story has mainly to do with effect rather than cause. Hetty Forrester, the wayward beautiful Derbyshire girl, was not the first to jilt her true lover, and elope with the false. Bob Guy was not the first true lover to be jilted; nor Captain Talbot the first to run away with a rich man's daughter, and ill-treat and discard her when he found there was no money forthcoming. The brutal nature of the ill-treatment, to be sure, was rather out of the common, and that was why Bob Guy, accidentally meeting his old flame, destitute and abandoned, rescued her. The rescue took place in London during a temporary visit to England. When jilted, Guy had swallowed his trouble and gone to New Zealand to join Hetty's brother Robert in the working of a sheep run; and after that holiday, to which the partners treated themselves, they took the deserted wife out with them. Talbot, loafing about London, had been an accidental spectator of the finding and deliverance of his deserted wife by Bob Guy, and in the course of time persuaded himself that he was a very wronged man. In the determination of levying blackmail, or punishing the man who, he would tell his cronies, had run away with his wife, he too must needs take passage to New Zealand.

One thunderous day in Christmas week he broke into the garden of Glencaird station, having waited his chance to find Hetty alone. There was a scene; upon which unexpectedly appeared Robert Forrester, who had ridden in to luncheon, and heard his sister's cry of terror. He hurried to the garden, and there was a desperate conflict between the two men. Then there was another shriek heard, this time by Bob Guy, who found Hetty in hysterics, his partner apparently stone dead from a stab by Talbot's knife, and Talbot fled. Fortunately Forrester had only fainted, and there were capable people at hand to take charge of him. When Bob Guy was free to fly to his revenge he found that Talbot had taken his favourite horse, Whirlwind, which happened to be hitched to the stockyard fence. He had to saddle up the mare Baba, and, in one way and another, some minutes had elapsed before he could start in pursuit; as he did, just when the long-threatened storm began to burst.

It is here that the story I have to tell really begins.

* * * * *

The horsemen who had departed from Glencaird, in the fashion above described, rode unconscious, in their passion and haste, that the elements, like themselves, were at war. Captain Talbot had wasted his substance in riotous living, and played havoc with a fine constitution; but he did not lack courage. In the extreme excitement of what he had gone through in the garden, coming, as it did, as a reaction upon months of morbid brooding, he was more like himself—as he used to be when he was a famous man in the shires—than he had been for years. He had been doing a good deal of riding during his stay in the colony, and was in form. With his blood at fever-heat, and Nemesis behind him, he was ready, the moment his feet were thrust into the stirrups of Bob Guy's saddle, to face the Devil, and dare him if needs be. He gathered up the reins, and touched the horse with the spur, knowing that he was about to gallop for his life. The odds were all against him. He was ignorant of the lay of the country; the scuffle in the garden had already produced a swollen and painful wrist; and with one arm almost disabled, he could scarcely use the knife which was still in its sheath. Still, he might be able to make some sort of fight, but clearly his main business would be to ride hard and give the pursuer no chance.

The track to which he was forced to keep at first was at least a couple of miles long, and there were two barriers across it: one the heavy slip-panels, to manage which he must dismount; the other the lighter rails, which he could unship by stooping from the saddle. But these operations lost him time; and then he found that it was necessary to lengthen the stirrup leathers. The horse was restive in remounting, and when in motion he would not gallop his best.

The horse Whirlwind was a noted character in that country. He had been originally employed as a cutter-out on a cattle-station; and was so clever at the business, that the stockmen who knew him never guided him, but left the old fellow to chase and double upon the cattle at his own will. His speed was prodigious; he was as sure-footed as a goat. But he would not do his best until he was warmed to his work; he was generally sulky with a strange rider, and was a confirmed slug with anyone who held a tight rein. Whirlwind was also famous on account of his ugliness. He had a coarse head and Roman nose; he was the biggest horse on the station, and the biggest eater. Yet he was always raw-boned and rough-coated, never in apparent condition, but really never actually out of sorts. He was a dingy iron-grey, with appalling length of leg. Talbot had taken him simply because he was nearest at hand, and the horse's peculiarities at first handicapped the fugitive heavily. When he spurred him, the horse stopped; when he pulled on him, he took a ragged stride, not unlike that of a camel. But at length Talbot discovered that Whirlwind must have his head: and so, passing out of the track in the bush, steered for a piece of comparatively open country, with forest beyond. His object was to reach this cover before he was overtaken.

MR. WILLIAM SENIOR,
"REDSPINNER," THE MODERN IZAAK WALTON.
From the Photograph by the Parker-Gilbert Process.

Baba, the three-quarters-bred chestnut mare which had been hastily saddled for Bob Guy was a perfect horse for bush work; would gallop, up hill or down, till she dropped, and had never been known to make a slip or a mistake. She seemed on this journey to know that she was on her mettle; for her master, who used to ride with loose girths, now tightened them up, and looked round her head to see that every buckle was right. The mare went off at a light swinging canter that soon increased to racing speed, and Bob saw with satisfaction that she was laying herself out, as if she knew the sort of quest in which she was engaged. The disorderly state in which the slip-panels and rails had been left was as good as a finger-post to Bob. His man, evidently, had passed that way, and had left it open for him. The fugitive, as we have seen, had been hindered; his pursuer, on the contrary, once in motion, had everything in his favour. Consequently, Talbot could not clear the open space; Bob Guy caught sight of him a minute or so before he entered the forest.

"By the powers, I have him in a trap!" said Guy, with a savage joy that boded ill for the other if caught. Baba apparently entered into the hot temper of her master, and bounded into the fern and across the open. In the forest there was no deviating from the one path which lay through it for miles. Had Talbot known of that impenetrable tangle of lawyer's-canes and supple-jacks, he had, surely, never ridden into that gloomy scrub. To turn aside to right or left would require clearance with axe or knife. On this day of angry storm the forest-path was in semi-darkness, and Talbot, plucky as he was, became oppressed with an undefined foreboding directly he entered it. The lightning at times illumined the ratas and red pines with ruddy flashes, and the thunder seemed to be caught in the higher branches and passed on from tree to tree.

Whirlwind had quick ears. Talbot wondered why, in an instant, the half-unwilling horse became so eager. He was transformed. He shook his head with a snort, and treated his rider to a new sensation. There was no more awkwardness. Having at last with all his heart got into the tremendous stride which had made him famous, he sped through the gloom like an arrow from the bow. Whirlwind had heard the thud of hoofs behind him; and, perhaps, recognising the action of his old racing rival, Baba, had snorted at remembering that on a short course she might possibly pass him. She was so far gaining ground that Talbot also soon heard the muffled sounds in the rear. "The avenger of blood is behind me!" he muttered, urging Whirlwind onwards.

Baba, going at her finest pace, soon heard the echo of hoofs ahead, and made a supreme effort, which Bob did not check. The longer Whirlwind galloped the better he was. If the mare overtook him, therefore, it must be before they emerged from that forest path. It was now as much a race between the iron grey and chestnut as between the once successful and once unsuccessful lover of Hetty Forrester. The only difference was that the rivalry of the brutes was innocent; that of the men, devilish and murderous. A dead bullock completely blocked across the track in the middle of a steep descent, but these impetuous horses neither shied at nor struck the obstacle. Whirlwind first, and Baba five minutes later, cleared it flying, striking sparks from the rocky way as they clattered down beyond. Up the rough pinches they went, kicking the boulders spinning from their hoofs. Through pools of slush, up slippery slabs of granite, as along the levels, they maintained their wonderful gallop.

The critical moment arrived at last. Baba was in sight of Whirlwind's gaunt haunches when he turned a sharp corner at the rise of a smart hill. She leaped of her own accord out of the track, scattering the blossoms of the shrubs, and crashing through the bush fuchsias and ti-trees. Knowing the land, she had cut off a corner. But Whirlwind had heard the snapping of twigs and passing tumult amongst the dense undergrowth, and, just pricking an ear by way of receipt of intelligence, cleared the crest of the rise, one might say, without touching the ground. It was like flying rather than running. Bob Guy shouted to Talbot to stop.

"Stop and fight for it!" he shouted. "You can fight women: fight me!"

(Continued on page 29.)

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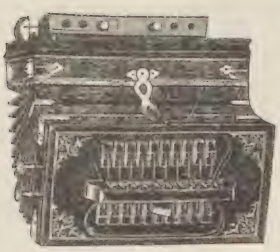

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The precise words were lost, but Talbot well understood their import. For answer he leisurely drew the knife from its sheath, the belt of which he had shifted to bring it round to the left side. Seeing this, and not knowing that the right wrist was damaged, Bob took out the revolver that he had hurriedly stuffed into his pocket and made ready to use it.

"If you don't stop, I'll fire!" he shouted, now less than two lengths behind.

"Fire and be damned to you!" said Talbot, quietly and sardonically over his shoulder. He was deathly pale, but quite cool, and riding as if cemented to the saddle.

As a matter of fact, Bob Guy pulled the trigger and there was a snap; and pulled for the next cartridge with the same result. The six-shooter was charged with empty cartridge-cases. In his rage, Bob hurled it with all his strength, and heard the rattle of the stock upon the back of Talbot's head. The latter made no movement. Then, a moment later, feeling the warm trickle upon his neck, he dropped the reins altogether and, meanwhile, left the travelling entirely to Whirlwind. Bob supposed that the other was well armed, and was not inclined to be squeamish. He determined to give his old rival no quarter. The burst of passion which had cast away the revolver certainly made the men more equal. It was now hunting-crop (heavy) against a sheath-knife (fairly long and straight).

The Captain could do little with his knife. He was not accustomed to left-hand thrusting, and was unable to lean towards Guy, who, galloping abreast on the near side of Whirlwind, plied the hunting-crop with severe effect. Every swing of the strong arm from left to right planted a stinging blow upon Talbot. After two or three cuts across the face, Guy became ashamed of that warfare, though, at every chance, the other tried viciously to stab him in the thigh. Then he made his assaults with the object of disabling Talbot's left hand; failed in doing so, but struck the knife, and sent it gyrating into the thicket. The horses meanwhile were galloping wildly. This break-neck work must soon come to an end now, and both men were anxious to end it. Talbot seized his opportunity, and gripped the crop at the next stroke at his wrist. For a while there was a mighty struggle, each man trying to pull the other from the saddle. A sudden clap of thunder interfered, causing Baba to sheer off to an almost imperceptible degree, yet sufficient to force Bob into relinquishing his whip-handle; at the same time the final jerk was such that both lost their hold, and the crop followed the revolver and the knife to the safe keeping of the bush.

The riders were at length out of the wood, and had before them a mountainous descent of perilous nature. The track was strewn with boulders, and intersected by water-courses, down which muddy torrents were tumbling. There was no stopping the express speed of those horses. Neck or nothing was still the order of the day, though either man would have trembled to force a horse down this ravine-path in cold blood. They got through it without accident and without check, and were then on the verge of the mysterious volcanic country that has been truly called Wonderland. It was Maori country, and there was a large tract of fern and flax-bush that had never been cultivated. Talbot here discovered that he had no control over Whirlwind; pull as he might, the horse took no heed.

"Keep out of that!" Bob shouted at the top of his voice. "'Ware boiling springs!" he added, forgetting his wrath in the new peril.

Whirlwind was ploughing through the fern in fine style, having it all his own way, and going in a straight line. Guy's consolation was that the clever old horse might steer wide of danger. He followed at a canter in Whirlwind's tracks; then, becoming excited, put Baba to a hand gallop. Talbot, if he heard the warning, made no sign. He must have been in acute pain, for all the assault and battery had fallen upon him. Bob, as he went after, keeping him in sight, began to pity him. He respected the antagonist who could suffer and speak never a word.

Bob Guy sniffed the air. The storm had not reached this level yet, though the skies were black or steely, and the edges of the clouds were fringed with copper. What, then, was the suggestion of sulphur in the atmosphere? What was the smoke ahead? Probably the remnants of a Maori fire. No; it was a very different matter. The seeming smoke was steam from a boiling spring. The sulphur was manufactured in volcanic regions. Baba was uneasy, and Bob reduced his pace to a walk. He got off, and picking up a piece of stalk thrust it into the ground, and a jet of steam shot up with sputterings of scalding mud. He led the mare back, and found a native track through the fern upon hard ground. Mounting, he galloped forward, watching the progress of Whirlwind, who had not paused in his mad career. By-and-by, the positions changed. The two men were abreast of each other again, but half a mile of ferns and flax-bushes with untold perils stretched between. Whirlwind had by this time taken his rider irretrievably into this dangerous land, and was galloping over a thin crust, beneath which cauldrons were seething and bubbling. Two miles more and he would reach the beginning of the geyser country. Bob looked at Talbot, and again was moved with somewhat of pity. He could not help but admire his coolness and daring.

And even as, sitting in his saddle, he looked, pitied, and admired, Whirlwind and rider disappeared from the face of the earth. The hocks and hoofs of his favourite iron grey appeared for an instant above the fern. That was all. The vendetta was terminated. The scapegrace husband was swallowed up, and the stanchest horse in New Zealand with him. So far as Bob could see Talbot and Whirlwind did not part; they shot into the bowels of the earth, as they had sped through the forest and down the ravine, as if they were made of one complete substance.

In the company of a few Maoris, Bob Guy hastened to the spot as soon as possible. There was a black abyss sloping obliquely into emptiness. A man allowed himself to be let down by ropes, and cast a lighted torch away when he was at the end of the tether. It fell down and down, until it was a mere spark, but there was nothing but thick darkness, and the echoes of unearthly roaring.

* * * * *

In the following winter while Hetty and Bob were spending their honeymoon at Tauranga, they heard ominous rumblings and felt strange tremors of the earth. This was the day of the great eruption of volcanoes up in that Maori country. An awful change was wrought by the destruction. The gateway of death into which gallant Whirlwind bore his self-possessed and ill-fated rider was obliterated in the general wreck and vomiting of the earth, and a lake of hot mud now seethes where Baba picked her way out of danger.

MRS. KERR MUDGEON'S BIG TRUNK.

BY HOWARD PAUL.

Mr. Kerr Mudgeon was a hard, grasping, cantankerous, middle-aged man, with a red nose, goggle eyes, and iron-grey hair, who kept a small grocery shop in a by-street of Gravesend. Notwithstanding these physical deficiencies and his usually unkempt, unlovely appearance, he had been twice married; and no sooner was his second partner comfortably under the earth than he looked around for a third wife to make miserable. Such was the evil reputation he had acquired in Gravesend, both for severity of conduct and parsimony, none of the local lone widows nor poor unmarried young women could be induced to give friendly ear to his loving protestations. They had heard too many gloomy tales of his tyranny and greediness, and sent him to the right-about in short order.

MR. HOWARD PAUL.
From a Photograph by Mayall and Co., 161, New Bond-street, W.

Kerr Mudgeon was not easily discouraged, and if a wife was not to be found in Gravesend, the world was wide and women abounded elsewhere. He had occasion to go to London to procure supplies for the small corner grocery from which he derived his support; and in the metropolis he found a female to his mind who was not sufficiently acquainted with his character to reject his suit.

When Kerr brought his bride home it will readily be supposed that the gossips of Gravesend lost little time in making her acquaintance, and very little more in enlightening her on the subject of her husband's shady reputation. Mrs. Mudgeon smiled at all that was told her, tossing a head a little at the story of the beatings meekly received by the two former wives, and pursing up her lips as if to intimate that she, the third, had no notion whatever of submitting to any such harsh treatment.

It was not long before her fortitude was put to the test. The bride announced to her husband that it was highly appropriate that they make some return for the attentions which had been shown them, and that she contemplated nothing less than a grand old-fashioned High Tea-party on Christmas Day. Surprise for a moment held Kerr silent, Such an innovation was so astounding as almost to deprive him of the power of speech. He quickly recovered it, however, and swore that he would be neither dictated to by his wife nor ruined by her extravagance. The lady, instead of attempting to allay the rising storm, did all in her power to provoke him still further; and it required but few words to work him up into a towering rage. From words he was ready to proceed to blows. Seizing a bamboo-cane, which had probably served him for a similar purpose with his former partners, he prepared to administer to his bride a sound castigation.

"Stop!" exclaimed the lady, producing a carving-knife and meditatively examining its edge. "It was not in the marriage service that I should be flogged by you. If we cannot live together, we'll separate; but you shall not beat me."

"Very well; all right," he returned with an oath as long as his cane. "Pack up your duds, then, and be off! You may have your Grand High Tea in your native Holloway."

Like the discreet woman she was, Mrs. Kerr Mudgeon made no reply to this observation, but went quietly to work to gather such Lares and Penates about the house as belonged to her. Her possessions had been brought to Gravesend in a huge packing-case-looking family trunk large enough to contain a ton of coal or a small bedstead, and this she now opened to replace in it her belongings.

Kerr, like most mean mortals, was inordinately suspicious, and he greatly feared lest his departing spouse should carry off with her more than she had brought. He stood over the trunk to examine each article as it was put in. The lady spread upon the bottom of the trunk some bedding. Kerr stooped over to assure himself by actual examination that it was all hers, and the lady took advantage of the movement to trip up his heels and send him headlong into the trunk. Before he had time to realise what had happened the lid was closed and the key turned.

The oaths which Kerr Mudgeon swore when he found himself caged—or, rather, trunked—were enough to entail upon him a thousand years of purgatory at the very least, if they did not send him headlong to a warmer place. He raved, he roared, he attempted to break the lid, he struggled and fumed; but all to no purpose. The trunk was a sturdy one, iron bound, and held its own stanchily.

"I shall smother," he yelled, with a kick at the lid.

"Oh, no, lovy," replied his tender wife; "you will breathe nicely through the large key-hole. A funeral is more expensive than a tea-party, you know."

"I'll kill you when I get out, you Jezebel, you hag, you"——

"You are not out yet, my poppet," she interposed as he paused for a word sufficiently strong. "Don't excite yourself, love. I hope you won't be lonely, sweet; but I must get ready for my tea-party. Good-bye, darling Kerr."

Such fragrant Oopack, such toothsome crumpets, to say nothing of toast and shrimps and cakes and jellies and marmalades, as were that Christmas Day served at Mrs. Mudgeon's were for months talked about among the gossips at Gravesend. It was the Highest of High teas, such as those bidden to it had never before beheld.

The hostess met her guests with effusion. Never had she appeared more charming. The time passed quickly and pleasantly until tea-time, when the ladies were ushered into the room where stood the tremendous trunk. "I know you will pardon me, ladies," the hostess said in a genial sort of way, "that I have gratified a whim of my own, in using this trunk for a table. My dear old eccentric grandmother had her wedding-breakfast upon it, then my mother did the same, to imitate her, and I like to keep up old traditions. We will call this a Grand Combination Christmas and Bridal Feast."

The guests expressed themselves delighted with so novel an idea, and in the highest spirits sat down to the sumptuous meal. The good cheer and fragrant tea soon loosened their tongues, and scandal and chaff flowed freely. The hostess adroitly led the conversation to her husband, and there was not an incident of his past life left undiscussed. He heard more truth concerning himself in half an hour than ordinary men listen to in a lifetime. He endured it as long as it was possible for mortal patience to put up with, and then turned angrily over in the trunk, swearing an oath that would have staggered the Army in Flanders. The gossips dropped their teacups in dismay.

"Be quiet, Kerr, love," purred Mrs. Mudgeon with exasperating coolness. "You rattle the dishes. You were saying, Mrs. McGlaggerty, that it was thought the beating Kerr gave his second wife hastened her death?"

"Mercy sakes alive!" exclaimed Mrs. McGlaggerty, "Is your husband in this trunk?"

"Certainly. Why shouldn't he be? Don't you ever find it necessary to take your spouse in hand," asked Mrs. Mudgeon, smiling.

"But—but Mr. Mudgeon is such a—such a"——

"Such a brute?" the hostess calmly finished. "I know it. But he means to amend."

"I don't!" roared a voice from the trunk.

"Oh, I am sure you do, Kerr, love," returned his wife, "for I cannot let you out until you do, and you must feel it monotonous in there."

It is needless to relate the conversation which followed. Doubtless the entire female chorus urged upon the culprit the expediency and necessity of radical reform. At any rate, the unfortunate Mudgeon was forced to capitulate, and by the time the ladies had finished their tea he was prepared to promise anything.

They released him, and welcomed his shamefaced reappearance in the light of day as the return of the prodigal. His limbs were stiff with long confinement, but when he had been fed with the remnants of the good things with which the gossips had been regaled, he was so far recovered as to comply with his wife's request to trim the fire and light a number of fresh candles. There, upon the hearth, lay the ends of his cane, as they had fallen down, the rest having been consumed.

A bully, once thoroughly subdued, is usually the meekest of men, and ever after that adventure with the trunk Kerr was pointed out by all the neighbours as an excellent husband, and when their partners proved refractory or rebellious these dear creatures were accustomed to remark:—

"Be careful what you're about, or I'll borrow Mrs. Kerr Mudgeon's big trunk."

"NONE SO GOOD."

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"Yours very truly, REV. WALTER B. CAREW."

[COPY.]

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"Dear Sir,—My two little girls, aged respectively three and two years, showed symptoms of having worms, so I obtained some of your Worm Bon-Bons from Mr. Busby, and they effected such a thorough cure—in fact, I think, saved their lives; the eldest little girl had sixteen worms come from her after taking your Bon-Bons, so I think it my duty to acquaint you with the fact that others may be alike benefited.

"Yours gratefully. FREDERICK WILLMOTT."

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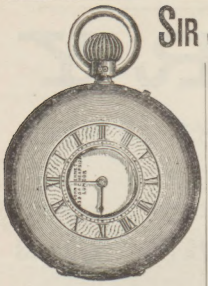

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In return for a £10 Note, free and safe per post, one of

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offers the remainder of his choice and valuable stock of KEY WINDING WATCHES at 20 per cent discount.

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The CHEAPSIDE ¾-plate KEYLESS LEVER WATCH,

with chronometer balance, and jewelled in thirteen actions, in strong silver case, with crystal glass. The cheapest watch ever produced. Air, damp, and dust tight. Free and safe per post, for £5. 5s.

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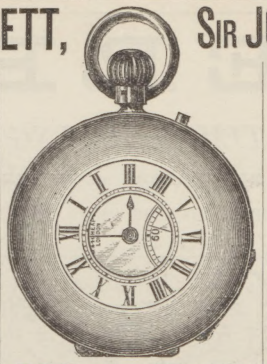

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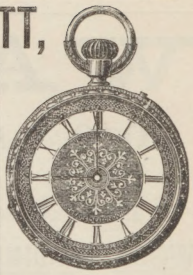

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This Caution is necessary, as many persons deceive purchasers by false representations.

DR. J. COLLIS BROWNE'S CHLORODYNE.—Vice-Chancellor Sir W. PAGE WOOD STATED PUBLICLY in Court that Dr. J. COLLIS BROWNE was UNDOUBTEDLY the INVENTOR of CHLORODYNE, that the whole story of the defendant Freeman was deliberately untrue, and he regretted to say it had been sworn to.—See the *Times*, July 13, 1864.

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The GENERAL BOARD of HEALTH, LONDON, REPORT that it ACTS as a CHARM, one dose generally sufficient.

Dr. GIBBON, Army Medical Staff, Calcutta, states:—"TWO DOSES COMPLETELY CURED ME of DIARRHŒA."

From SYMES and CO., Pharmaceutical Chemists, Simla, Jan. 5, 1880.

To J. T. Davenport, London.

"Dear Sir,—We congratulate you upon the widespread reputation this justly-esteemed medicine has earned for itself all over the East. As a remedy of general utility, we much question whether a better is imported, and we shall be glad to hear of its finding a place in every Anglo-Indian home. The other brands, we are happy to say, are now relegated to the native bazaars; and, judging from their sale, we fancy their sojourn there will be but evanescent. We could multiply instances ad infinitum of the extraordinary efficacy of DR. COLLIS BROWNE'S CHLORODYNE in Diarrhœa and Dysentery, Spasms, Cramps, Neuralgia, the Vomiting of Pregnancy, and as a general sedative, that have occurred under our personal observation during many years. In Cholraic Diarrhœa, and even in the more terrible forms of Cholera itself, we have witnessed its surprisingly controlling power. We have never used any other form of this medicine than Collis Browne's, from a firm conviction that it is decidedly the best, and also from a sense of duty we owe to the profession and the public, as we are of opinion that the substitution of any other than Collis Browne's is a deliberate breach of faith on the part of the chemist to prescriber and patient alike.—We are, Sir, faithfully yours, SYMES and CO., Members of the Pharm. Society of Great Britain, his Excellency the Viceroy's Chemists."

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Gentlemen,—Having suffered severely from Bronchitis, I was recommended by a Physician at the London Hospital to try "Roche's Embrocation." I have pleasure to let you know I have used the "Embrocation" with good result, and shall in future recommend the same to any of my friends who should be suffering from the same complaint.—I am, Gentlemen, yours truly, G. A. DORWOOD.

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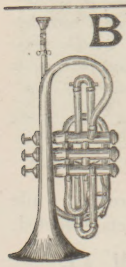

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WORTH READING.

THE EMPEROR OF GERMANY:—"REGIMENT OF HUSSAR GUARDS, POTSDAM, Aug. 21, 1887.—The regiment requests you will dispatch thirty-one watches as soon as possible, as the persons interested wish to have them before the manœuvres. — WILLIAM, PRINCE OF PRUSSIA, Colonel and Commander of the Regiment."

THE SULTAN OF MOROCCO:—"TANGIER, Oct. 15, 1887.—To the Manager of the Waterbury Watch Co., London.—Dear Sir,—The Sultan of Morocco has his hours of prayer—five times a day, beginning with an hour before sunrise—regulated by a Waterbury Watch. Some time ago his Majesty made a present of one to one of his private chaplains (from whom I heard the story) for that purpose. If you make use of this incident, please give as your authority the Editor of the *Times* of Morocco.—I am, Dear Sir, J. E. B. MEARIN (for the Editor)."

G. H. LEA, 37, Ashton-street, Liverpool, Missionary in South Africa:—"I have recently returned from a journey in South Africa of over 2,000 miles. Before leaving England I purchased one of your 10s. 6d. Waterbury Watches, and also took with me one of . . . watches, costing twenty guineas. The . . . watch only went two months from the time it was purchased, while the Waterbury, costing one-fortieth the sum paid to. . . . went splendidly the whole time, and was twice immersed in water without being the least damaged. I have pleasure in bearing this unsolicited testimony to the worth of the Waterbury."

NOTE.—The maker of the watch mentioned herein is one of the best known names in England. The original of this letter and of all other testimonials can be seen at our office.

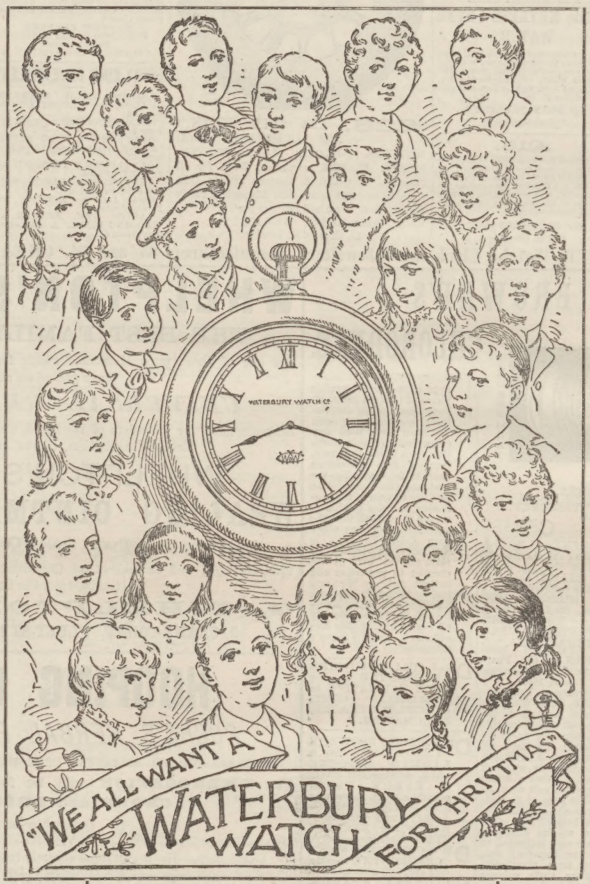
MR. GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA writes:—"You should have taken to a Waterbury long ago. I wore mine own, at first, compulsorily; but ere long I learned to love it—it keeps such excellent time."

MR. EDMUND YATES writes:—"I have already supplied my loss with a Waterbury, and have purchased three others within the last twelve months."

MR. GEORGE R. SIMS writes:—"I now wear a Waterbury instead of 'Grandfather's Clock,' as the valuable heirloom I have hitherto personally conducted over the world is familiarly called."

PROFESSOR THOS. A. EDISON, the famous Electrician, writes:—"I have used the Waterbury Watch for some time, and find that it is the only one which will keep reasonably perfect time when used around powerful dynamo machines."

Messrs. LAING, WHARTON, and DOWN, Electrical Engineers and Contractors, 82, New Bond-street, write:—"We have much pleasure in testifying to the excellence of your watches for use in our profession. We find they never magnetise, and keep perfect time."



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Pictorial World: "Our own experience is that the Watch is perfectly reliable."

Freeman's Journal (Dublin): "Serviceable to all. Altogether a capital article."

Dublin Evening Telegraph: "Extremely good timekeepers."

Belfast News-Letter: "An excellent timekeeper."

Belfast Northern Whig: "An excellent and reliable timekeeper."

Weekly Times (London): "The famous Waterbury—a favourite all over the world for accuracy and good appearance."

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RELIABLE.
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Runs 28 Hours with One Winding.
Regulates to a Minute a Month.
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THE BEST PROOF OF ALL.

We, THORPE and CRONK, Chartered Accountants, 43 and 44, Lombard-street, London, E.C., do hereby certify that we have examined the books of the Waterbury Watch (Sales) Co., Limited, and find that the said Company has received orders at the London Office alone—

	WATCHES.
Between Nov. 1, 1886, and Dec. 31, 1887, for	216,935
Between Jan. 1, 1888, and May 19, 1888, for	113,889
A Grand Total in 19 Months of - - -	330,824

(Signed) THORPE and CRONK,
Chartered Accountants,
43 and 44, Lombard-street, London, E.C.

NOTE.—*These Sales are quite irrespective of, and in addition to, all Sales made through New York Office.*

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